

MICRO ACTION

4MTIX! CPC

THE GREATEST CPC MAGAZINE IN THE WORLD!

**ALL THE LATEST CPC
GAMES REVIEWED!**

**#CPC RETRODEV 2023 IS
HERE! WE BRING YOU THE
RESULTS AND REVIEWS OF
THE TOP 3 WINNERS!**

**SEAN MCMANUS GETS ALL
CHRISTMASSY AND LOOKS
BACK AT THE AMSTRAD ACTION
CHRISTMAS COVER-TAPES**

IT'S CHRISTMAS!

AM-TECH

**BANGING TO THE BEAT OF THE AM-DRUM! A
LOOK AT CHEETAH'S CPC DRUM MACHINE**

AMSTRAD ART

**ZOË KIRK-ROBINSON BRINGS YOU THE VERY
BEST IN CPC ART**

**GAME COVER CRACKERS - 1986
COMPILATION CORNER
AMTIXCPC ADVENTURE TAVERN
LATEST PREVIEWS**



Merry

AMSTRAD
FESTIVMAS





MICRO ACTION **AMTIX!** **CPC**



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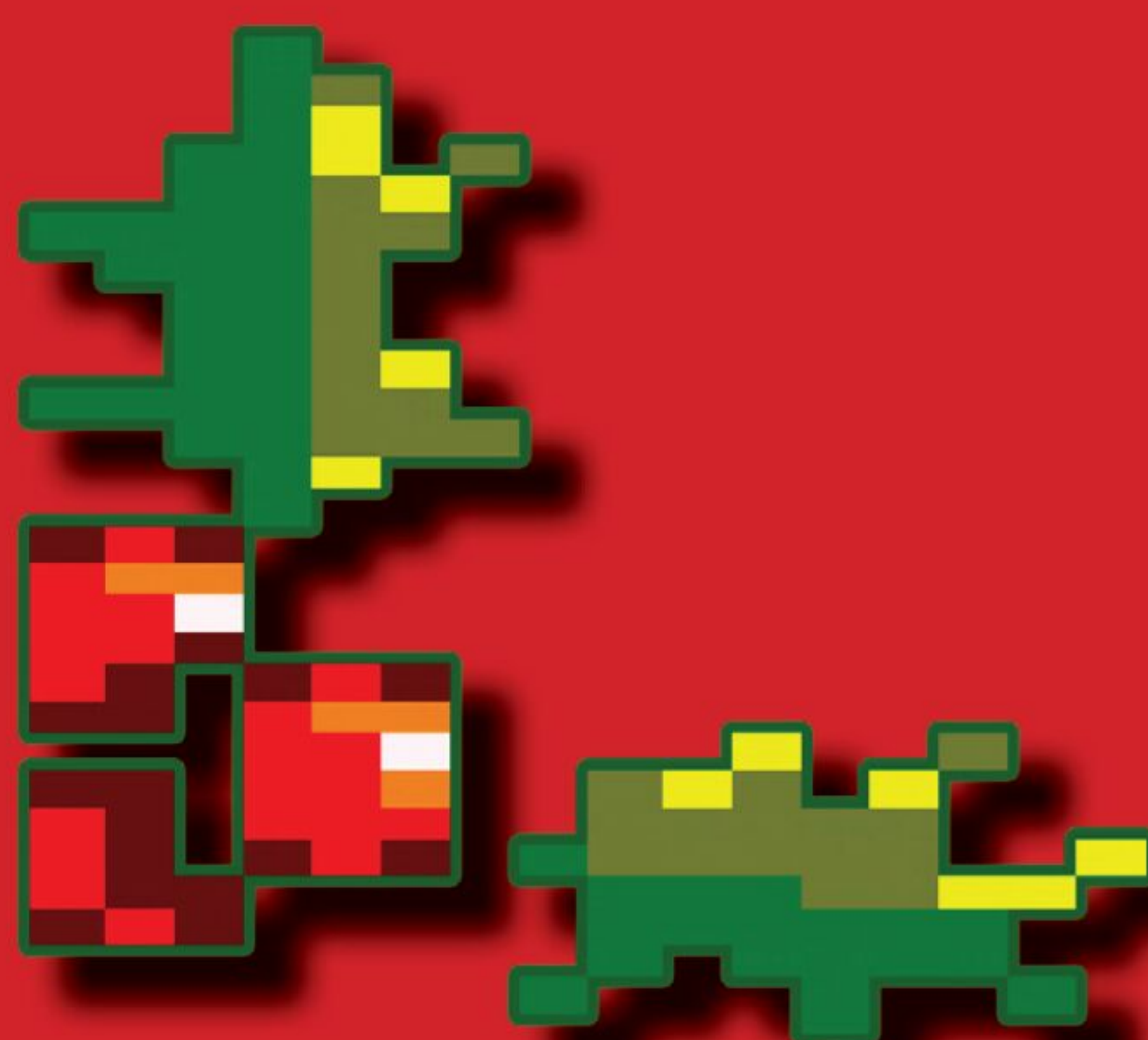
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FUSION RETRO BOOKS

AMTIX!

CPC



Ready



Hey there, fellow Amsters! Welcome to this festive Issue #10 of AMTIXCPC Micro Action. We did it! We've finally reached the double-figure mark. 'Tis the season to spread CPC love and joy once more, which we intend to do by bringing you all the latest and greatest from the CPC world.



Being December, that also means there's been another #CPC RetroDev contest. "Hurrah!", I hear you all cry. And what a contest it has

been. As always, you'll find all the results in this issue, along with reviews of the top three winning games.

As well as the #CPC RetroDev contest, you'll find all the latest game reviews, which for this issue include *Mario Bros*, *Ghost Trick*, *Vexed*, *Segura River*, and *Octopus Deluxe*.

Sean McManus returns with a fantastic Christmassy feature for you all as he takes a look back at the Christmas Cover Tapes released for the CPC. Zoë treats you all again with another four CPC artwork masterpieces, and if that's still not enough, you can drool over Graeme Mason's Game Cover Crackers.

CPC Historian Paul Davies looks back at the original Issue #10 of AMTIX: you know, the one with the severed hand on the cover.

Finally, in AM-TECH, yours truly has been creating a ruckus around AMTIXCPC towers getting to grips with Cheetah's *Am-Drum*, while Sean McManus brings his report from the 2023 Retro Computer Festival.

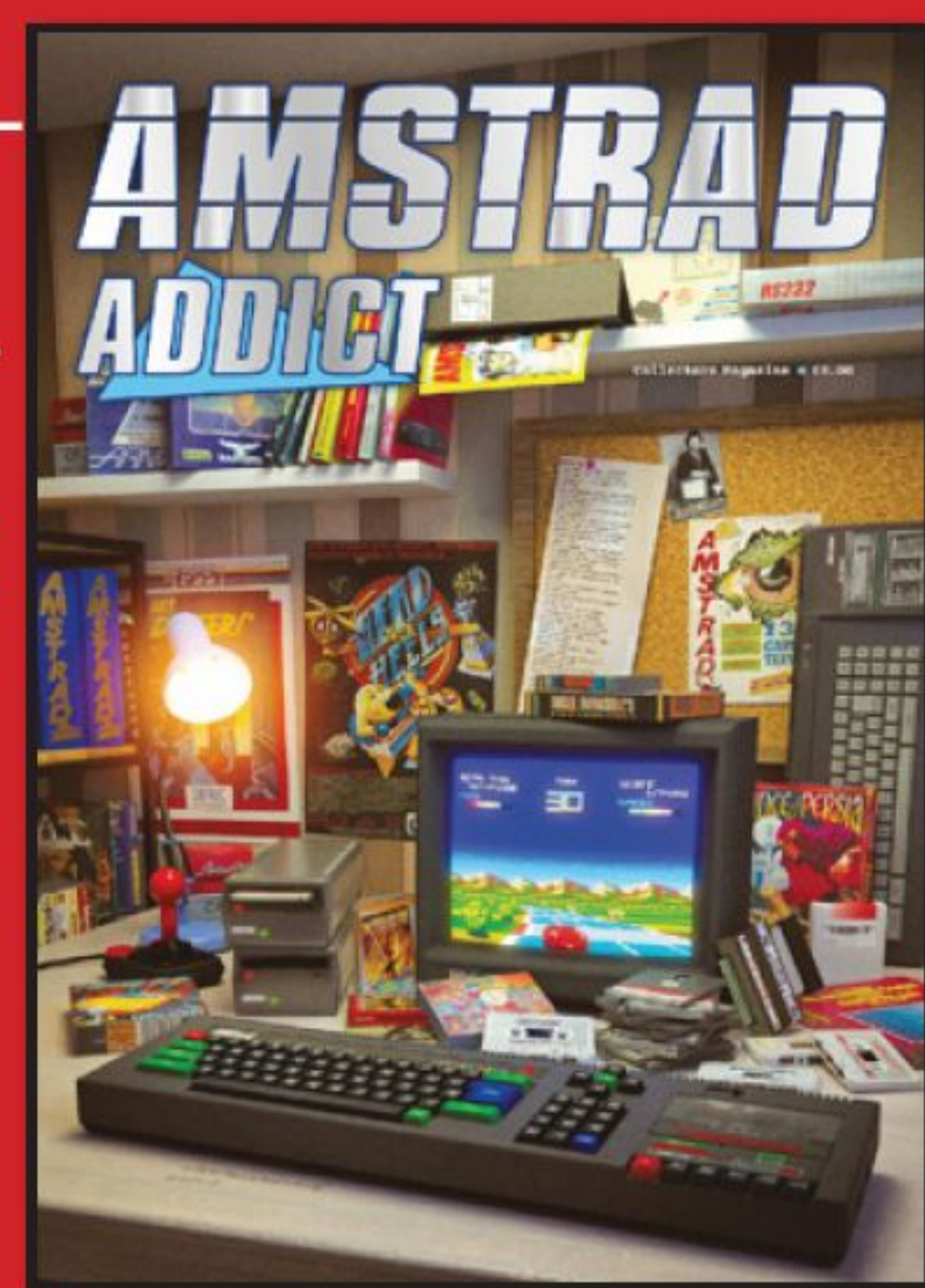
New CPC Mag!

CPC super fan Dave Crookes, or CrookieMonster as he goes by on the CPC Wiki forums, has teamed up with Addict Media, the people behind the fantastic Pixel and

Amiga Addict magazines, to create a one-off limited edition Amstrad special! Called Amstrad Addict, it features articles by two of Amstrad Actions regulars, Stuart 'Balrog' Whyte and Adam Peters, as well as, wait for it, an exclusive interview with none other than Lord Sugar himself! There's also pieces from Tony Warriner of Revolution Software and Philip Oliver, one half of the renowned Oliver Twins. That is but a mere taste of what you can expect to find in this superb 60-page special. There's even a Locomotive BASIC Type-Ins section featuring a listing by none other than our very own Sean McManus. You can order Amstrad Addict now in digital PDF or physical format over at Addict Media's website.

Now, let's get back to AMTIXCPC! and on with the issue.

Ready?



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

FROM THE AMTIXCPC TEAM

RUN™ A-TEAM.BAS

COLIN BELL

Has been a massive fan of the CPC ever since his dear old Mum bought Dad one for Christmas in 1986 to use for his electrical business — that never happened! He has fond early memories of playing The Custard Pie Factory, Super Gran and Rig Attack!



A serious collector of all things Amstrad, he currently has over a whopping 2,300 games in his collection along with various CPC systems and hardware. Colin also writes for other publications under the Fusion Retro Books banner and is very honoured to be taking on the role of editor for AMTIXCPC.

GORDON KING

Or Kingy as he is known in the retro community is one of the hosts of RGDS Podcast. He's one of those strange creatures that love all of the 8-bit home micros and won't get involved in a 'which is better' debate. He is no stranger to the Fusion Retro Magazine



house and currently writes reviews and some articles on CRASH. His personally owned Amstrad is the 6128, and by the time you've read this, he's modified it with a Gotek drive. No Amstrads were hurt during this daring mission.

ZOE KIRK-ROBINSON

Is a talented artist and comedian who makes games for old computers live on YouTube. Zoë got her first Amstrad when she was four, a decision her parents almost instantly regretted. She didn't stop playing on her CPC until the age of forty, and even



then, only stopped to write something for this magazine. Zoë also produces CPCine, a YouTube documentary series that charts the life of the Amstrad CPC and she very kindly provided the artwork for all the lovely faces you see here. She lives in Bolton, in a cocoon made from retro games.

CHRIS WEATHERLEY, AKA 'NOVABUG'

Is a retro gaming YouTuber and writer contributing to various websites such as The Pixel Empire, RetroUnlim and Indie Retro News. A self-confessed CPC fanatic, 'Novabug' is well known for his Saturday live streams where he tests real CPC cassette



games on real hardware, to much amusement and sometimes disappointment. He is also the product of a hybrid breeding project, to splice a human and an alien to create the ultimate Amstrad guardian. Funded by Lord Sugar, the project wasn't a success.

BEN HONEBONE

Spent the late 1980s and early 90s huddled around a green screen playing Arkanoid, Wizball, and other colour dependent games on the CPC 464. From this self imposed isolation there emerged a lifelong Amstrad enthusiast and video



game connoisseur. Ben can also be found working at Fusion magazine, making music with bands and as a solo artist, making music videos and content, and generally roaming around the Welsh countryside looking for fighting game players.

SEAN McMANUS

Got an Amstrad for Christmas 1984 and wrote his first Amstrad program that same day. Sean contributed type-ins to Amstrad Action (AA) and Amstrad Computer User (ACU), and wrote the Sprite Definer that appeared on AA's cover tape. He wrote a



couple of tutorials for ACU too, and a BASIC programming book called The Basic Idea. Today Sean works as a technology copywriter and writes books about programming in Python and Scratch to inspire the next generation. Visit Sean's website at www.sean.co.uk to read his Amstrad book and play his games.

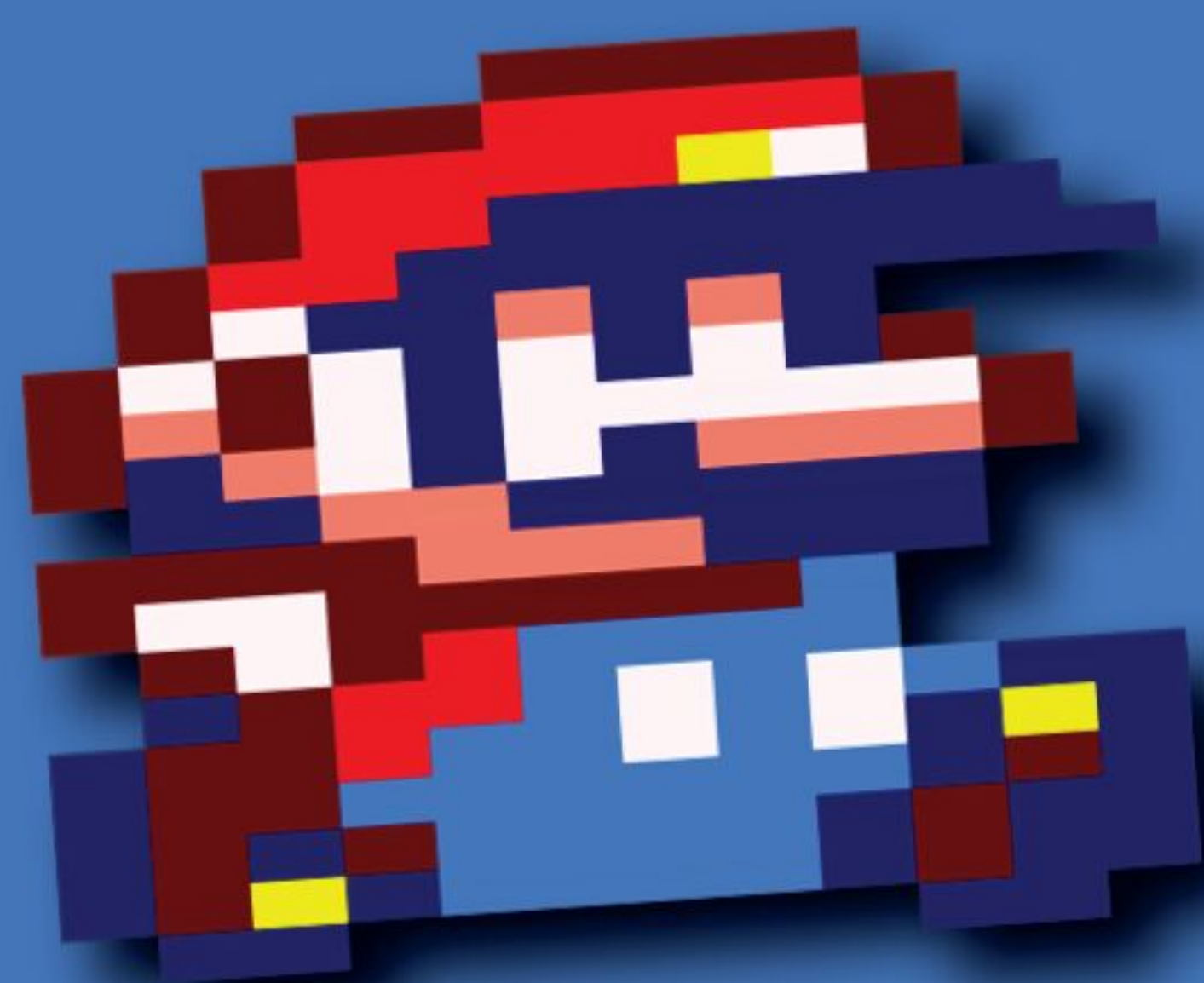
GRAEME MASON

A video games fan from a very early age, Graeme Mason grew up in the arcades of the late Seventies before embracing the home computer boom of the Eighties. Today, Graeme writes about retro games for Retro Gamer, Eurogamer and more,



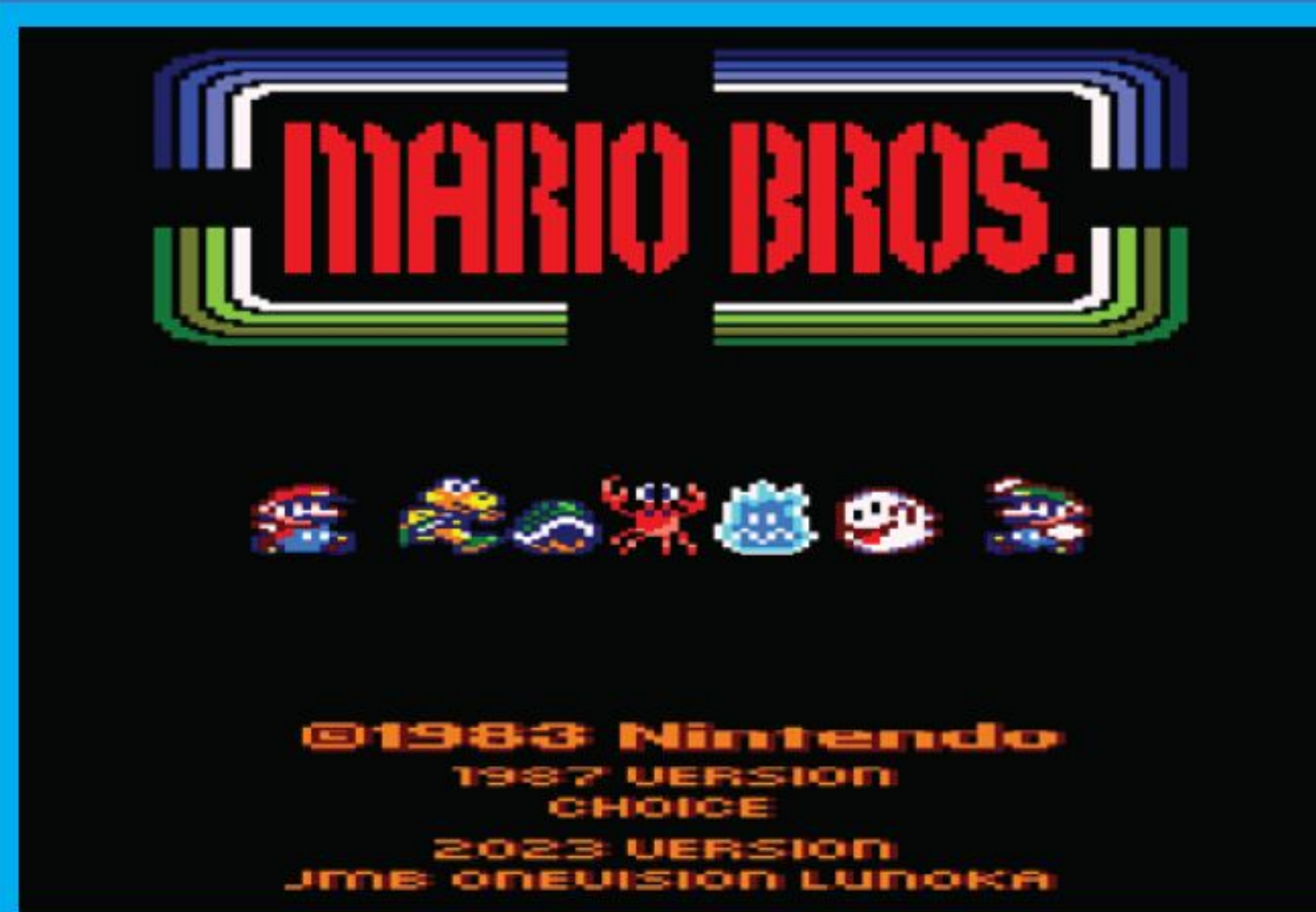
and while a Speccy fan at heart, he will always have a special place for the Amstrad CPC. The colourful graphics and incredible sound of games such as Sorcery+, Tau Ceti and Commando represent some of his finest memories of the iconic computer.

MARIO BROS.



Author: **JMB Onevision**
Released: **2023**

Nintendo ports, at least official releases, are a little thin on the ground with the CPC, and to be honest, that was true for many of the 8-bits of the 80s. However, back in 1987, the licence-hoovering machine that was Ocean Software got the Big N's permission to bring the original *Mario Bros.* game to the CPC, the first actual Mario game (we don't include *Donkey Kong* here, Mario didn't even have a name then). It wasn't a great conversation, to say the least, being only serviceable at best. The mode 1 graphical choice was not beneficial. Step forward JMB, Onevision, and Lukoka to give Mario a plumber's



makeover, so let's see what comes out in the wash.

The basic objective in this first franchise entry is to clear the sewers of the nasty creatures, including sidesteppers and shellcreepers, the latter of which would become Koopas. Bump the enemies



from underneath the platforms so they can be collected in a safe, sedate state. A single platform screen with a wraparound function, Mario and Luigi cannot yet kill enemies by stomping on them, so remember NOT to try that. That said, it is difficult not



Above: Look, shiny gold coins! Those Mario Bros. magpies love collecting them, and it's a love that has never died.



Colin



I was never a huge fan of this game to begin with, but with that said, the update by JMB Onevision is a welcome one and looks great.

I love the updated visuals and mode 0 graphics here that look as if they've almost been plucked straight out of Super Mario World on the Super Nintendo.

Gameplay has also been greatly improved, and the game runs nice and smooth.

Two-player mode is where Mario Bros. really comes to life, however, and I had a great time playing this with my son, who's a massive Mario fan. There are plenty of levels to keep you busy, as well as some bonus stages. Good arcade fun.

CRITICISM



to remember that now more than ever, given the Super Mario World inspiration of the new Mario sprite drawn by Onevision. Hit the familiar POW switch to tip over all the on-screen enemies in times of panic, collect the coins for bonus points, and move on to the next stage until all are completed. Bonus



Chris



This Mario Bros makeover is a welcome one indeed; the visual callback to one of the best Mario games ever is a superb choice.

The graphics on the original game always felt quite wrong and 'not' a Mario game.

This looks, sounds, and feels more like it.

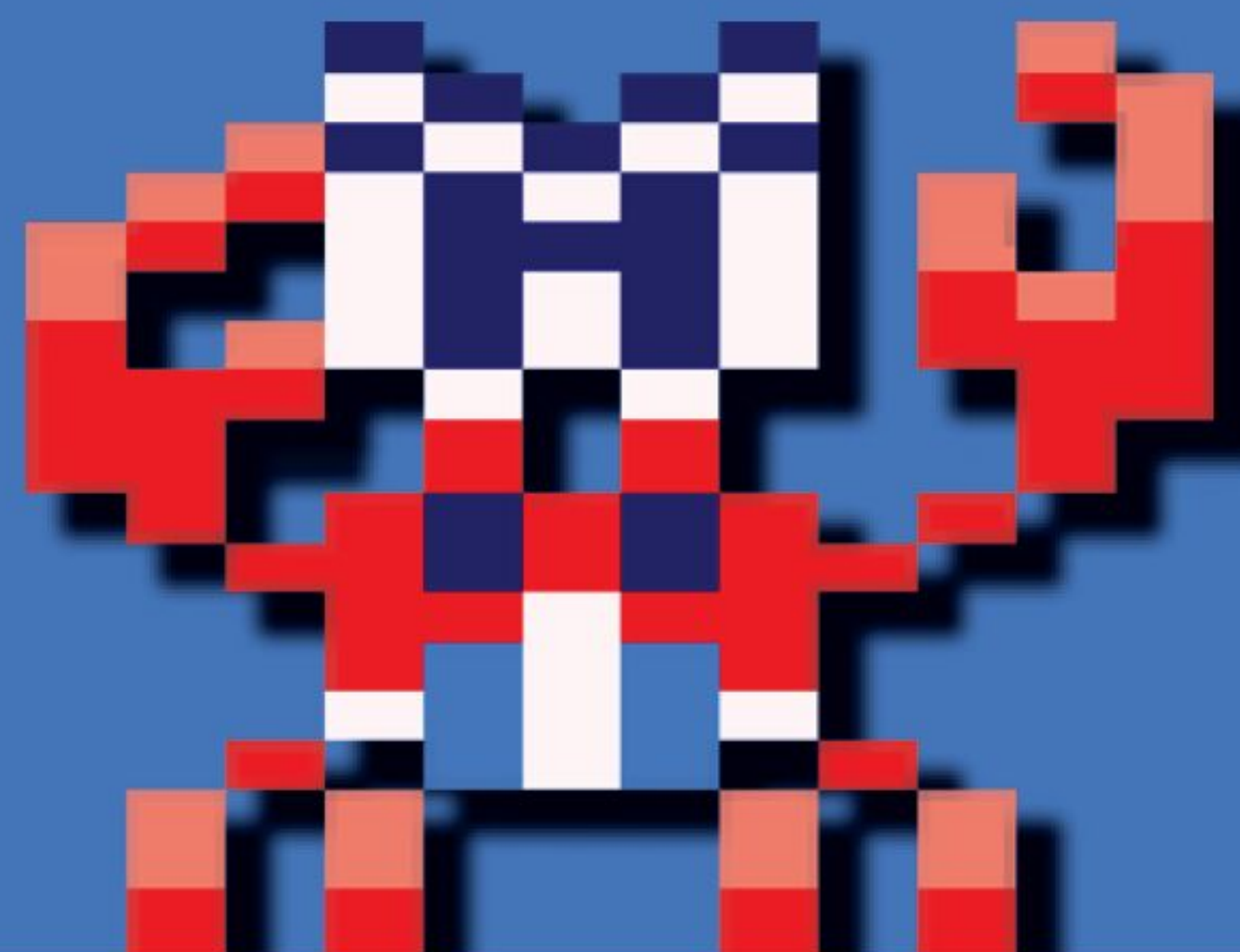
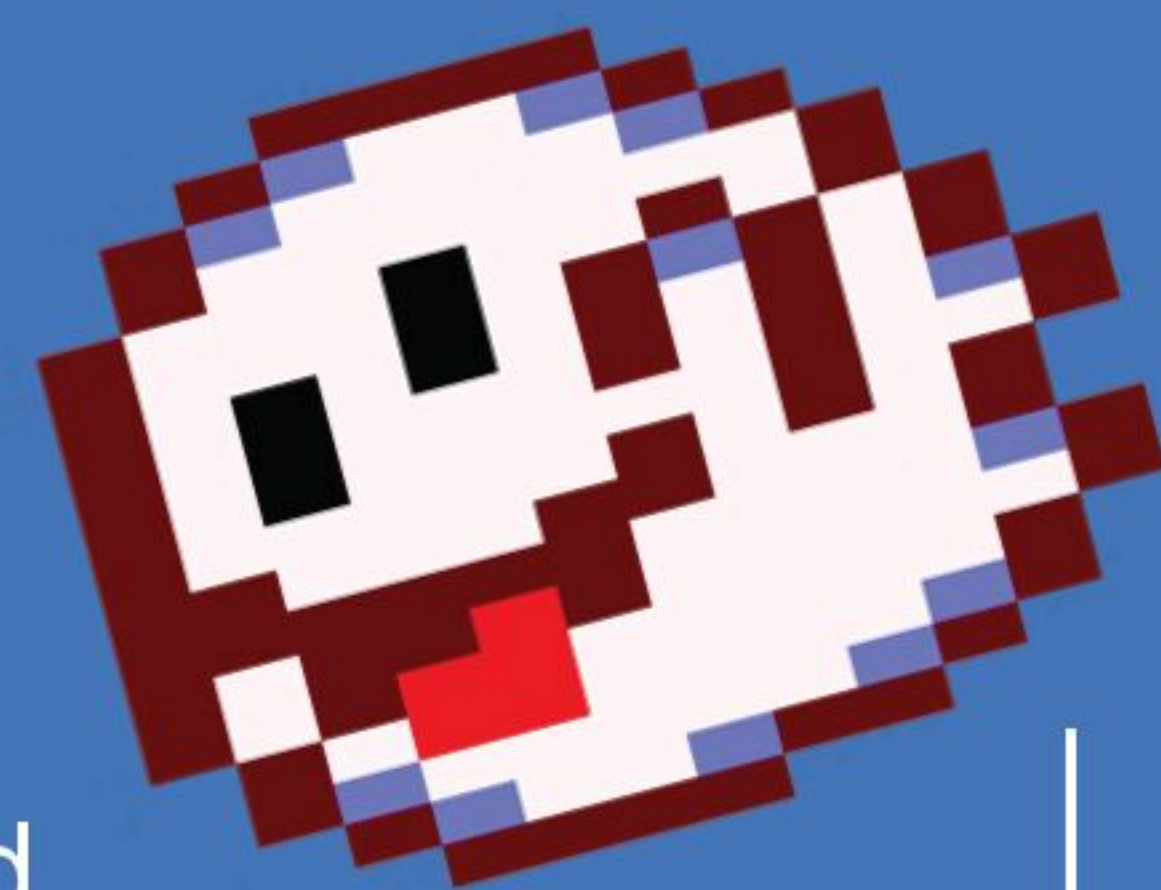
The character designs lifted from Super Mario World style on the SNES are excellently drawn, with the whole game switching to Mode 0 with all that glorious colour.

Efforts to improve the presentation are very good, with a lovely new title screen and suitable cutesy music with some of the original SFX still in place. However, while more playable in some aspects and more responsive, the flaws of the original game are still present. Jumping feels limited and tricky, with run-ups required to attain a jump between platforms, and the sprite clash is distracting. Thankfully, the slipping dynamic of the Mario sprite has been removed, and this makes the gameplay far less frustrating. It is a large step up from the original by all metrics, and can be a fun game to play to get a little bit of Mario heritage on your Amstrad.

CRITICISM

stages and a functional 2-player mode are also included to extend the

gameplay life. A simple arcade game setup which established many future Mario tropes to come over the years.



PRESENTATION 85%

Pleasantly presented in the style of a classic arcade game.

GRAPHICS 75%

Idea's taken from Super Mario World are a great inclusion. The switch to Mode 0 helps the overall look and feel.

SOUND 70%

Added tunes on the menu and title screens are both very 'Mario' in the way they sound.

ADDICTIVENESS 65%

Limited single screen platformer, and jumping mechanics a bit annoying to get to grips with.

LASTABILITY 70%

More playable than the previous version. A nice short nostalgia hit.

OVERALL 73%

GHOST TRICK



Author: **GGP**

Released: **2023**

For those affluent enough to own a NeoGeo Pocket (you clearly didn't scrape your pocket money together to buy budget games), you may recall the peculiar fighting game *SNK vs. Capcom: The Match of the Millennium*. Despite being a quirky, small-screen beat-em-up, it had a tip-of-the-hat back to the halcyon years of arcade games. Hidden within its depths was a feature known as

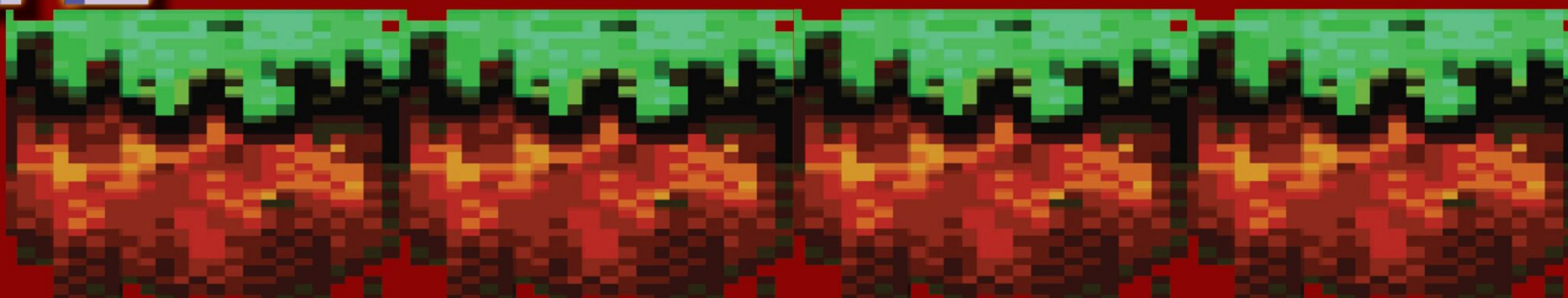
Olympic Mode, which, among other offerings, included a mini-game starring Arthur from *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*. This is where this title takes its inspiration from. It's a straightforward game where you control the most beloved knight in video game land. You must leap



Above: *Ghost Trick* is a simple single-screen platformer that couldn't simpler. Jump to the right, grab the bag of gold and jump back to the left.

across chasms and avoid the recognisable monsters from the arcade game - these progressively increase from barely threatening to demonic fearfulness as you get better at it. The premise is simple - you need to collect treasure on the right and then return to the left to collect the bounty that appears there. Think of a simplified *Hunchback*, and you've summed it up perfectly in your mind. And that's

really it. It was a mini-game on the handheld, and this doesn't pretend to be anything more. It's all about timing and the awareness of the clock. The game



Gordon



CRITICISM

As good (as always) as it is to see GX4000 titles being released in 2023, I'd rather have ones with some meat on the bone. Sadly, despite the seed of the inspiration of this game, there is nothing on offer beyond mild curiosity due to the mini-game's origins. It's lovely to see the Amstrad's interpretations of the main sprites from Ghosts 'n' Goblins - and they are infinitely better than the graphics we inherited in the official conversion - but there is nothing going on with them beyond a boring jumping game. I love the graphics - I truly do - but I wish they were used in a modern-day remake of the GnG since the latter one wasn't all that great visually. This is a neat exercise in coding but offers very little else for the player.



Above: After collecting nine bags of gold a full treasure chest will appear.

isn't a patient experience (a bit like the reviewer here) and only gives the player 30 seconds to collect 50 treasures in order to progress to the boss fight. Time is extended by every collection of the treasure that appears on each side, so expedience is paramount by taking risks with early jumping rather than idly waiting on an obviously safe

Chris



CRITICISM

If style over substance could be encapsulated in a single game, Ghost Trick takes this prize. It's as basic as it gets in the gameplay stakes, assisted by a graphical masterclass using the Plus hardware. The simple premise is short-lived and frustrating. This is a presentation demo with a bit of interaction required. Looks great, sounds great, but is ultimately empty. Play one of the two remakes of Ghosts N' Goblins on the Plus instead.



window. Fortune favours the bold, and trust me - you will have to take unprecedented risks to progress.



PRESENTATION 55%

Very simple and basic. It doesn't really draw you in.

GRAPHICS 70%

Lovely sprites but Arthur looks a little squashed.

SOUND 76%

Not bad at all. A cool in-game tune that's pleasant on the ears.

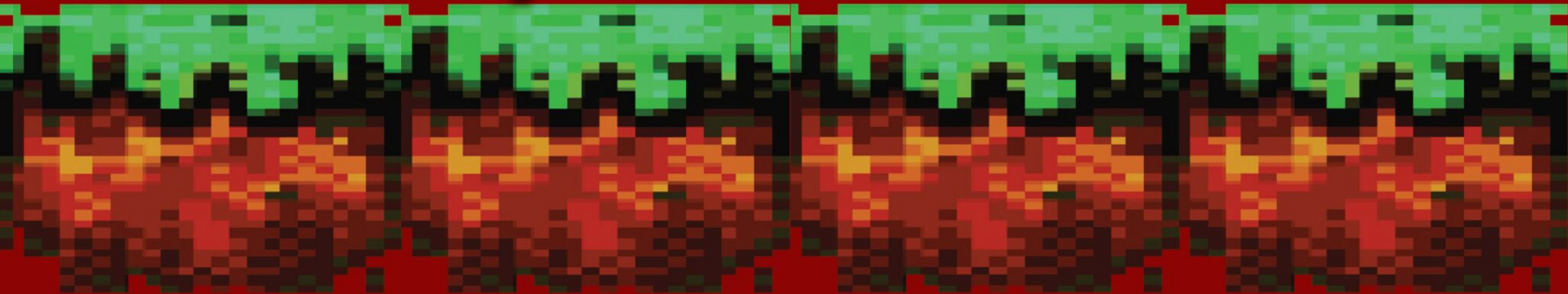
ADDICTIVENESS 40%

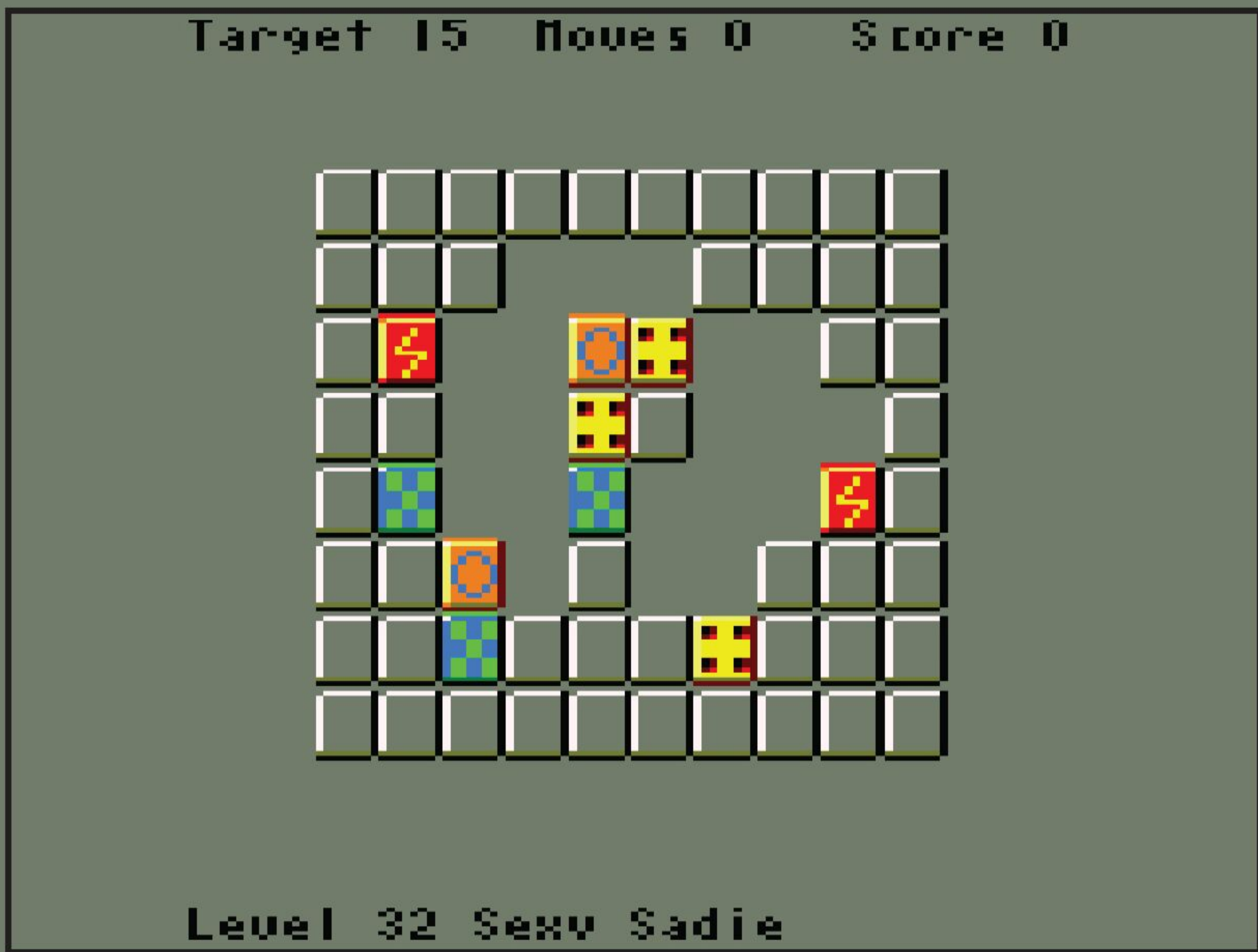
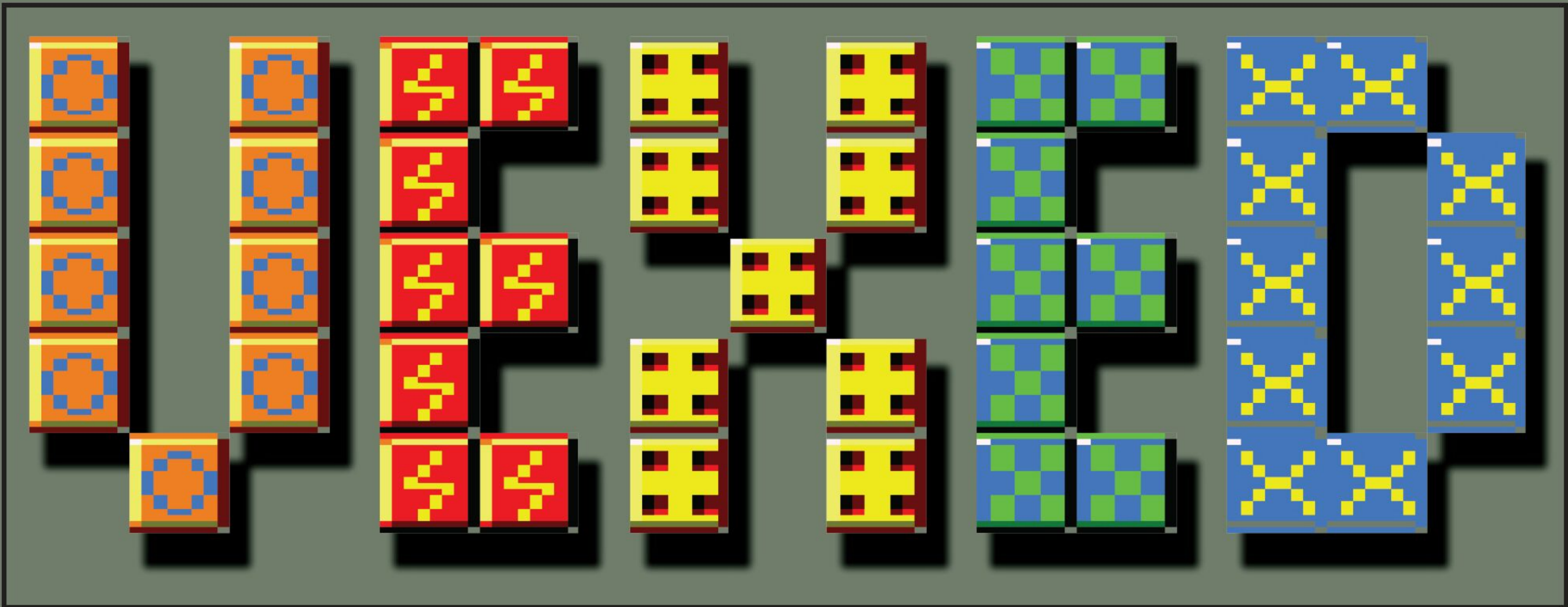
Unless you are obsessed with repetition, it won't keep your focus.

LASTABILITY 55%

It's hard and getting the treasures is harder than you think.

OVERALL 59%



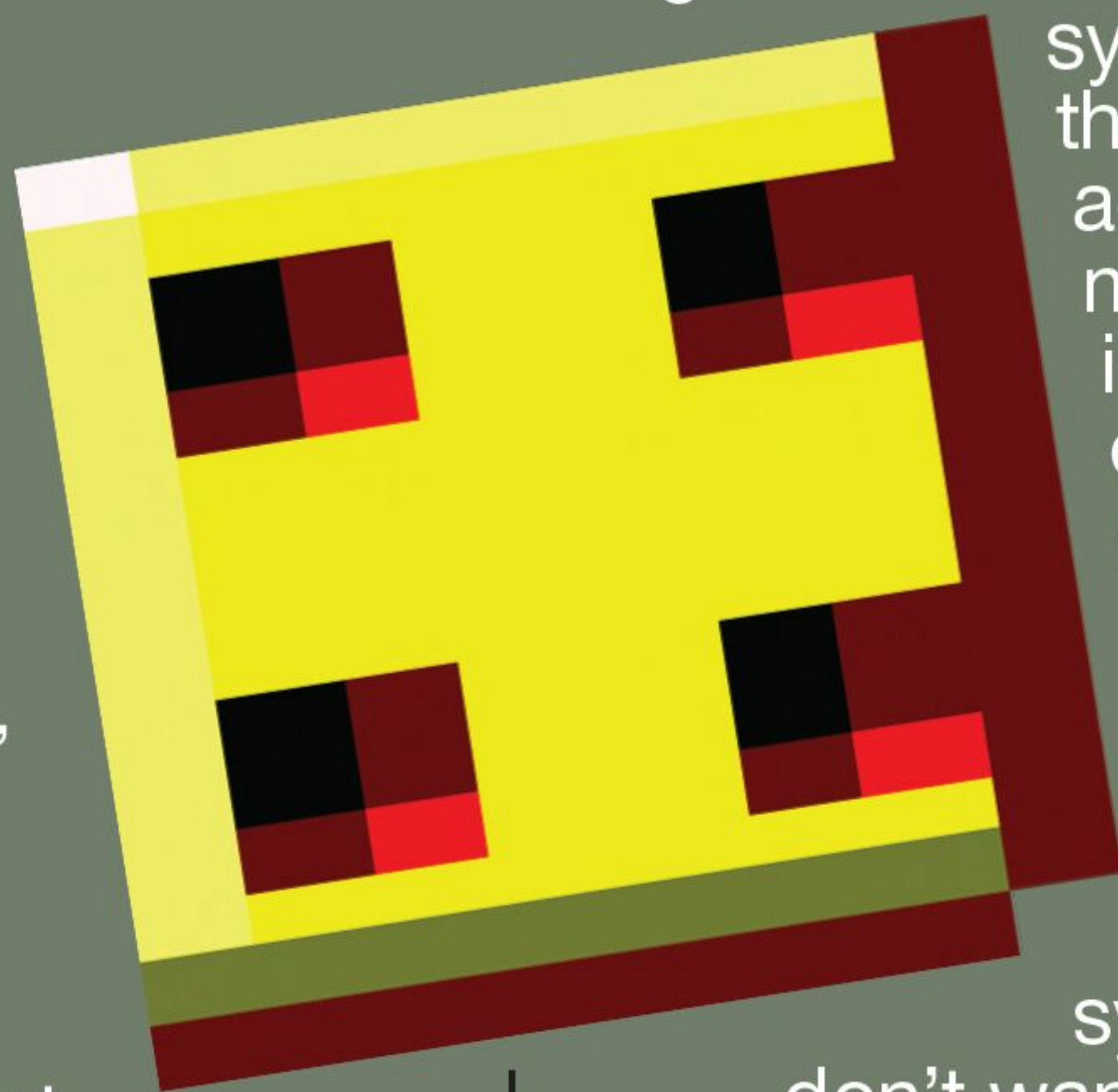


Above: *Sexy Sadie*, oer. As well as a number every level has a unique name.

Author: **GGP**
Released: **2023**

Puzzle games on the Amstrad CPC have typically fared very well over the last few years, with many a title being highly acclaimed. I consider this genre a real speciality of the Amstrad, so it's not a surprise to see decent

puzzlers still popping up. Tile matching has been particularly strong, with the likes of *Puzznic*, *Plotting*, and *Klax* being excellent releases. Under4mhz must



think so too, with four puzzle games made for the CPC in 2023. *Vexed*, I feel, is the best of the bunch. Fifty-nine levels await to be solved, with the objective being to move the tiles into a matching position to clear a game board in groups of over two. Tiles will fall if what is underneath is moved, which can create a match chain, another important part in working out the solution. The concept is a simple one, but well-designed levels and an interesting golf-like scoring

system make this rather addictive. A move target is set for each level; go over the target and you gain points, which in this system, you don't want. The aim





Above: The first level eases you in.
Below: The final level, any ideas?



Chris



The additive qualities of Vexed lie with the scoring system and level design, whereas the visuals are functional but blocky and unassuming. Any sound is restricted to a few bleeps and bops, no music (which would have been a welcome add-on) and the sparsest presentation you could imagine. But, while it may look dubious, it plays really well, and I found myself pondering for hours over the later levels. Cleverly planned puzzle fun with no frills.

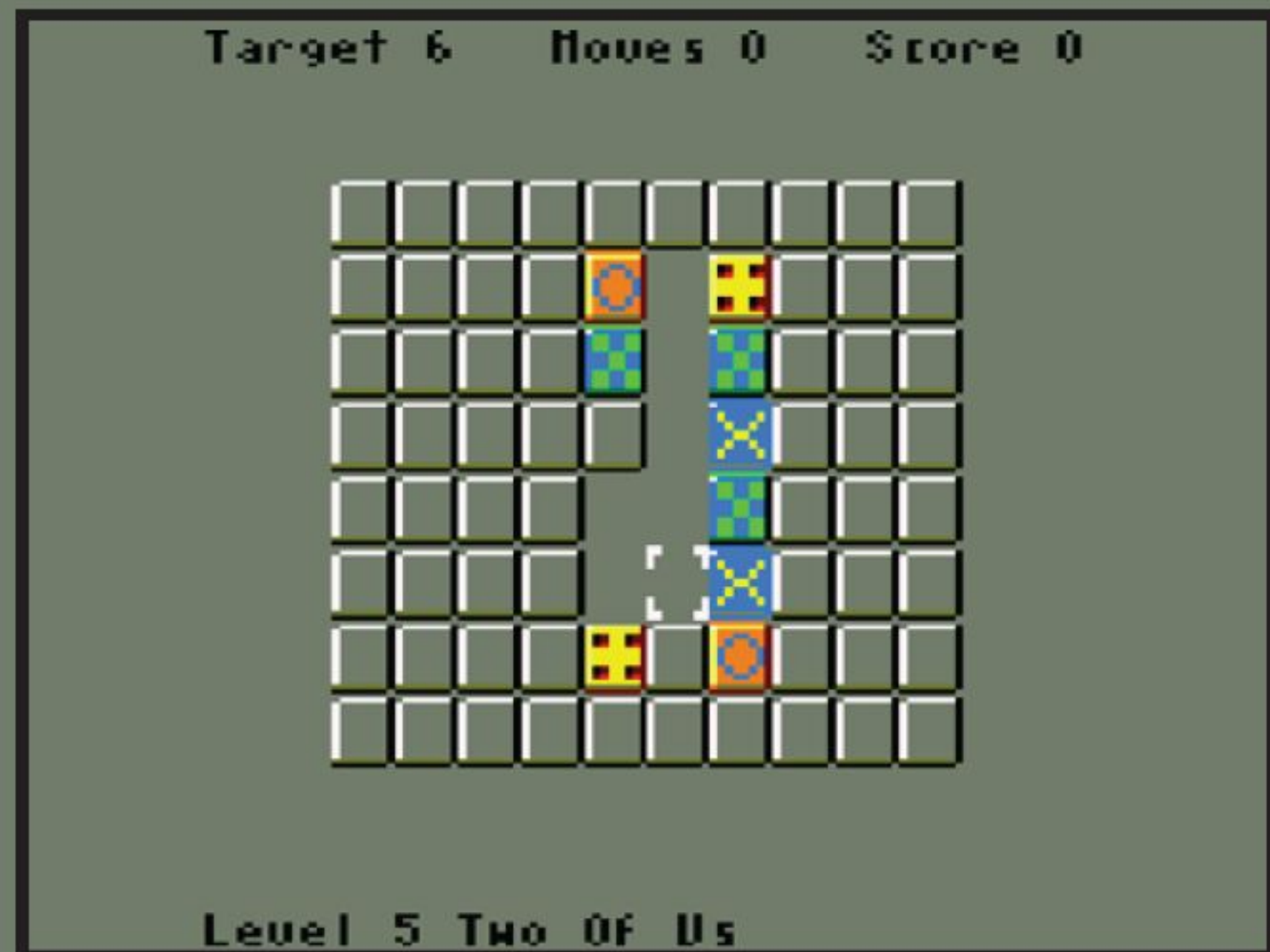
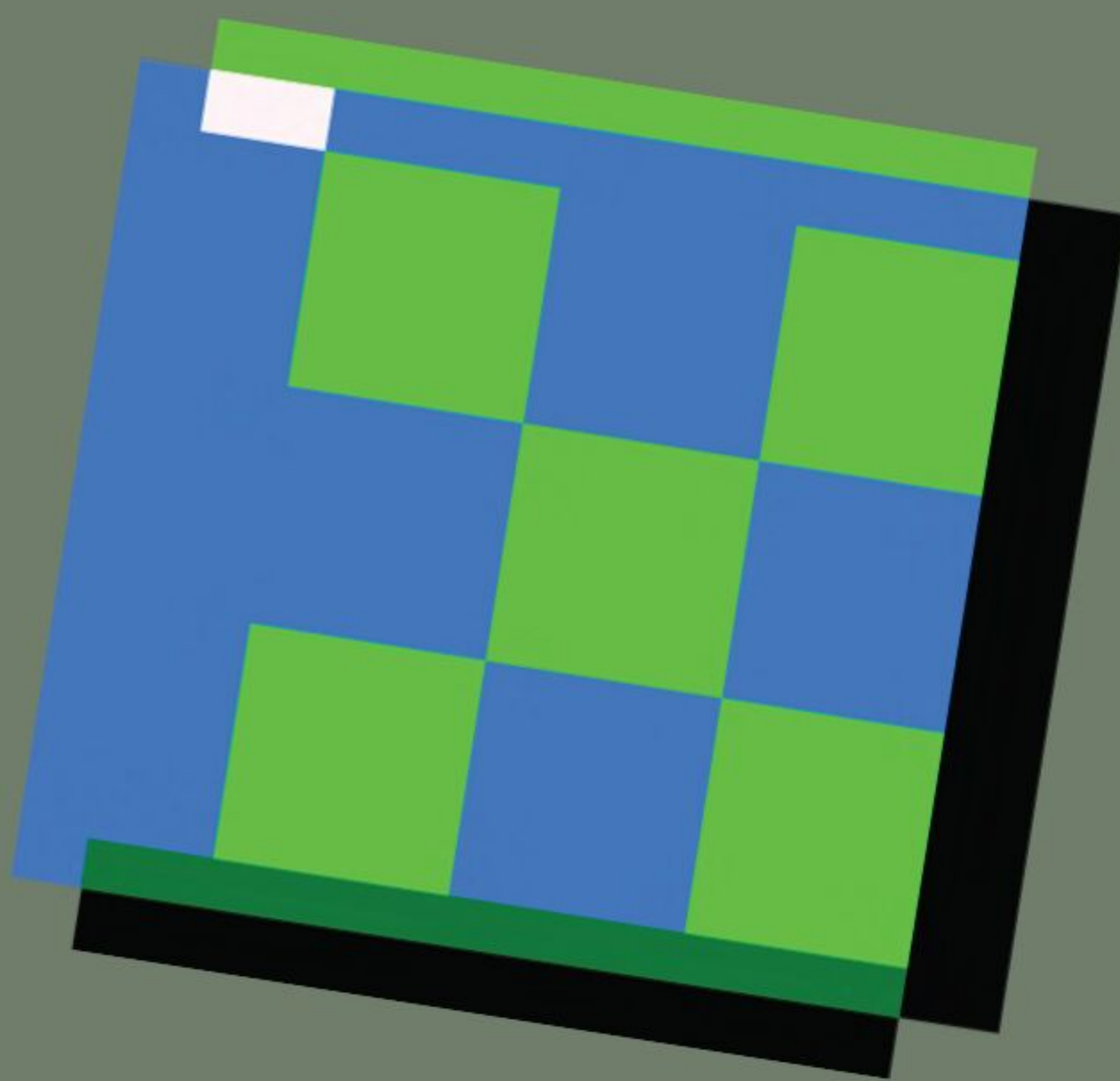
CRITICISM

Colin



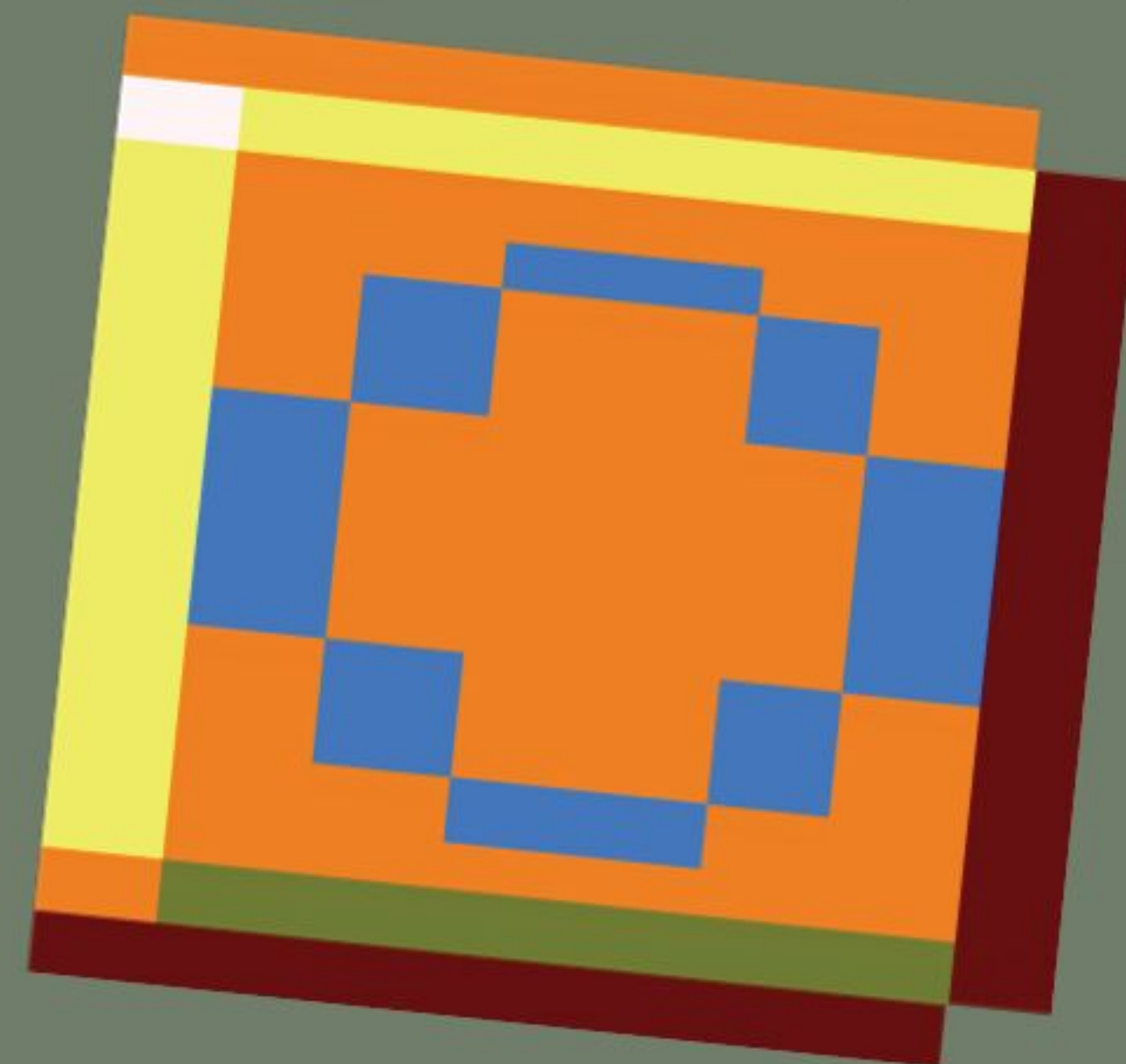
Yet another puzzle game on the Amstrad CPC, and it's a good one! Yes, it's basic and lacks a decent soundtrack, but stick on your favourite sounds and you'll soon be lost in the many levels of Vexed. The first few levels ease you in, but it's not long before the challenge ramps up and the frustration sets in. Thankfully, though, Vexed has that compelling one more try vibe to it.

CRITICISM



Above: Looks simple but trust me, it's not! Cunning puzzles await.

is to get the least number of points, which adds an extra layer of competition to an otherwise basic game. Things get trickier the further you progress, and some of these levels certainly do suit the title indeed.



PRESENTATION 40%

It has a loading screen which is a snapshot of the tile designs; that's about it.

GRAPHICS 35%

Colour is used to good effect to make the tiles stand out, with a slight 3D effect. Very simple, however.

SOUND 15%

A bleep here and there, and no music. Puzzle games NEED music.

ADDICTIVENESS 88%

You can get hung up on trying to solve a tricky level. Surprisingly addictive.

LASTABILITY 77%

59 levels is plenty to get on with. Replayability to beat your best score is a big draw too.

**OVERALL
51%**



SEGURA RIVER



Author: **Altanerus Dog**
Released: **2023**

Review by Gordon King

Quite like her in *Aliens* and *Gorillas in the Mist* – oh, wait, that's Sigourney Weaver. My apologies. I should be talking about the Spanish river – a game based on its pollution and a one-man mission to clean it up and restore it to its former beauty. Plastic bottles and tyres litter the entire length of this majestic river – it's not exactly a place you'd want to dip your toes into in its current state. So it's up to you – get that life vest on, get into your kayak, and do a spot of debris removal. Sailing down the



Above: The lovely digitised loading screen. Wow! That sure is one humongous haul of river garbage!.

Segura takes you through different locations, including rural regions and urban waterways. However, it's not plain sailing – there are natural hazards to avoid. Driftwood and mudbanks

pose a threat to your inflatable and must be avoided as you make your way downstream. The further you progress, the more manoeuvring you need to do to



Gordon



It's challenging to categorise this game into a specific genre – it lacks the fast-paced nature of an arcade game and doesn't fit the criteria for a sailing simulator. This type of game harkens back to an era where mundane tasks were glorified on our old CRT monitors. Segura River sadly fails to bring any excitement to the task at hand. There is no river current to resist, the random placements of the debris can be unfair, and the scenic location changes aren't enough to give a feel of variety within the game. I think a decent game can arise from it, but in its current state, there's simply not much of a game here that will keep a player interested. I was hoping for a bit of River Raid, but instead - I got River Wade.

CRITICISM



Above: Pee-yew! Is it me or has it got really smelly all of a sudden?

Colin



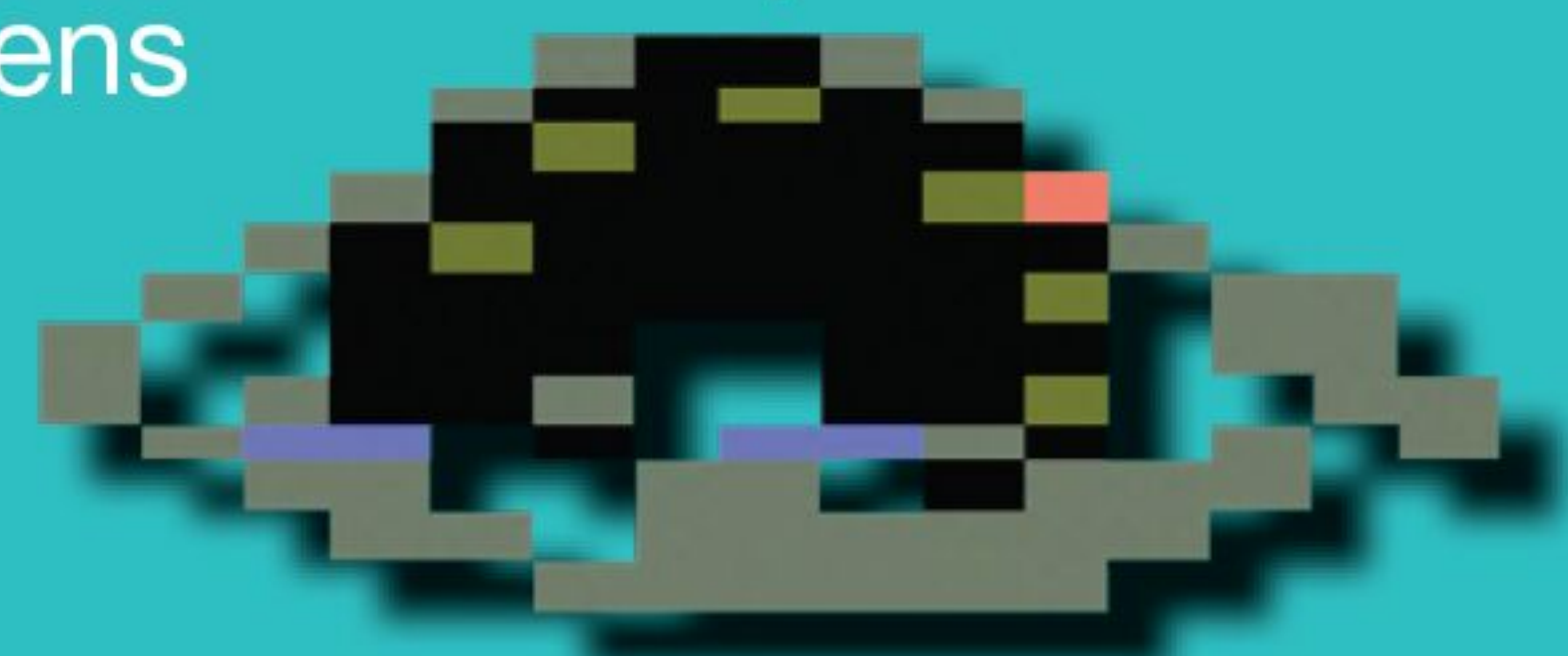
Paddling down the river should be a relaxing and leisurely affair, not one where you have to dodge plastic bottles, car tyres, rocks, and big old logs. But that's exactly what it's like on the turbulent waters of the Segura. The game itself looks okay, but gameplay is buggy, and the framerate of the main character is an issue. There's a modern-day message here, which is commendable, but the game needs more work and refinement if its to be appealing enough to players.

CRITICISM

circumvent these collisions. It can get so busy that you will have to consider sacrificing a collision point/life to get to a difficult-to-reach pollution item.



I'd like to say it's all plain sailing, but if you don't watch out, your own vessel will add to the pollution and become flotsam in its eddies and currents. Yep, ship happens when you least expect it!



PRESENTATION 59%

Basic title screen and then straight into the game

GRAPHICS 65%

Sadly, the music is slow and has odd pauses.

SOUND 45%

Not much really, other than annoying rowing spot effects.

ADDICTIVENESS 52%

Fails to give the player that one-more-go hook.

LASTABILITY 52%

Once you've done a few levels, I doubt you'll want to play it further.

**OVERALL
54%**





In our first 'Flash Back' this issue, Chris Weatherley is heading off on holiday with Titus Software's *Titus the Fox: To Marrakech & Back*.

TITUS THE FOX to Marrakech and Back

The history behind *Titus the Fox* is quite unusual. Based on a whimsical song 'La Zubida' by French comedian and actor Vincent Lagaf, it originally placed the hero Moktar in Paris, tasked to travel to Marrakech and rescue captive sweetheart



Suzy. With rather Franco-centric foundations, developers Titus made the decision to change the game for the international market, creating a character based on their own fox logo, with alterations to some music and graphics in the process, along with a name change.

Going for a wider audience appeal, I guess the reasons behind this on a business level are justified, especially considering this was supposed to be the first game of a franchise



Chris



With a fine musical accompaniment and glorious visuals, it can be easy to ignore the problems the game has. Picking up and using items is a vital part of the gameplay, and this is a struggle at times, with positioning and responsiveness being the main culprits. The sprite flicker is annoying at times, and the sliding scrolling, while smoothly done, can cause issues with enemies' movements, but the most obvious flaw is the slow-down, which is frequent and inconsistent, which after a while makes Titus the Fox a bit of a chore to complete to the end. It's a shame, because those graphics are foxy!

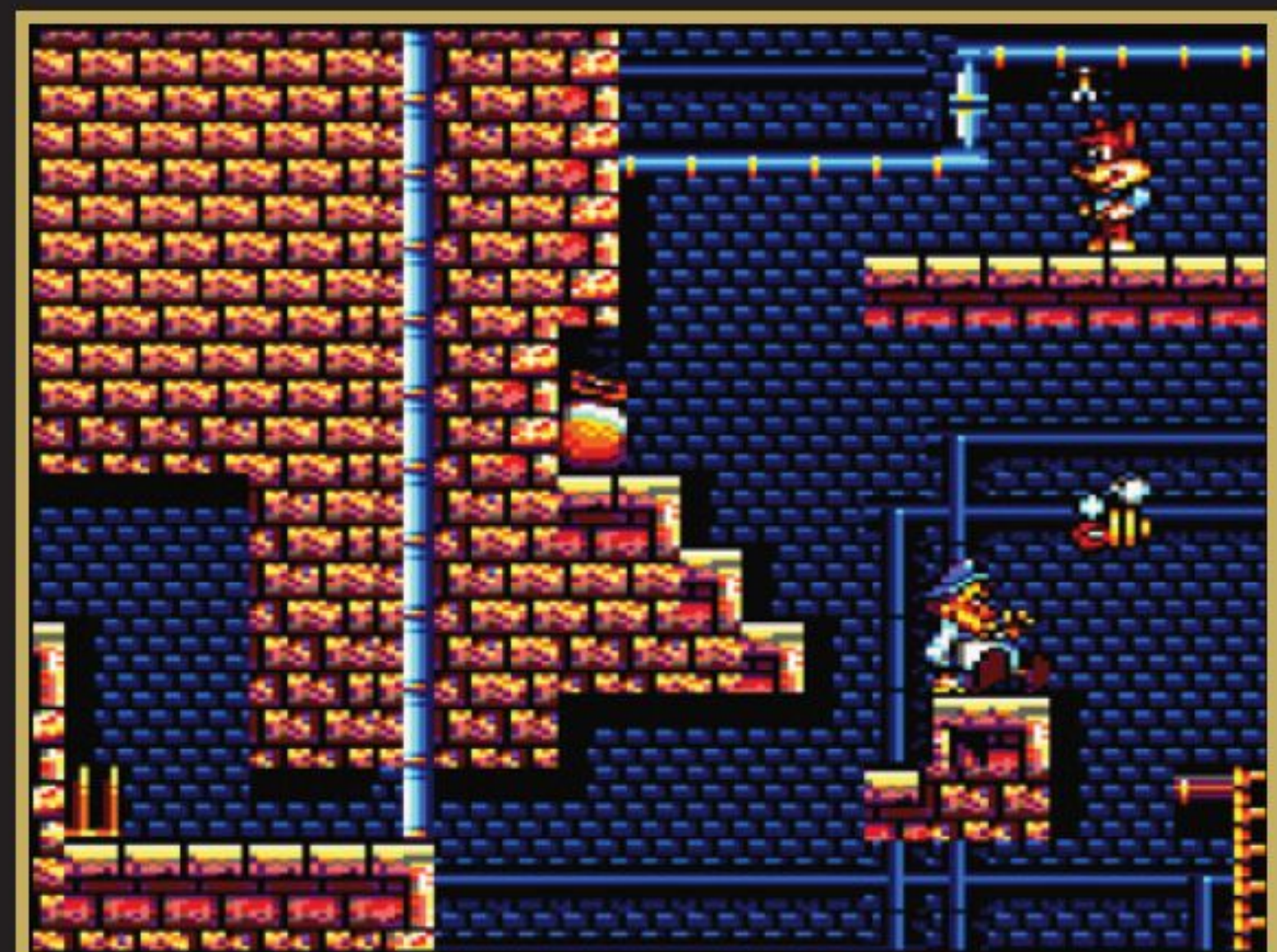
CRITICISM

about Moktar which never materialised. But it remains a unique series of events to bring the game to life.

Released late in the CPC's life, *Titus the Fox* proved popular with many a reviewer at the time. Its graphics are beautiful with well-designed sprites, background, and use of colour. It certainly had the hallmark of the coder, who previously worked on *Prehistorik*. Seven levels of platforming action await, and to conquer it's a case of using pickups to gain access to unreachable areas or to use



them as weapons against enemies. Working out the routes within each level is also an important element, a tried and tested formula with the genre. Fondly remembered as visually



striking, its flaws feel a little more enhanced as time has passed, and while a nice game, it doesn't wholly deserve the praise it received back in the day. Best left as a nice memory, this one.





Blown away? I know we all are here! What another amazing #CPCRetroDev competition. The overall standards and quality of the games seem to get better and better every year. No scoring controversies this year either, thankfully - phew! Over the next few pages, you'll find our team's reviews of the overall top three winners: *Alloy Box*, *Sugar City*, and *Paulina's Potions*.

Sadly we can't cover and review every single entry submitted, but the team here at AMTIXCPC Towers have been busy picking their favourites, and you'll find a couple more reviews in this issue, as well as a few more in Issue #11.

In the meantime, you can head on over and check out and play all the games for yourself here: <https://itch.io/jam/cpcetrodev2023>

1	ALLOY BOX	13	TOP GOAL	25	MASTER JEWEL
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ALLOY BOX

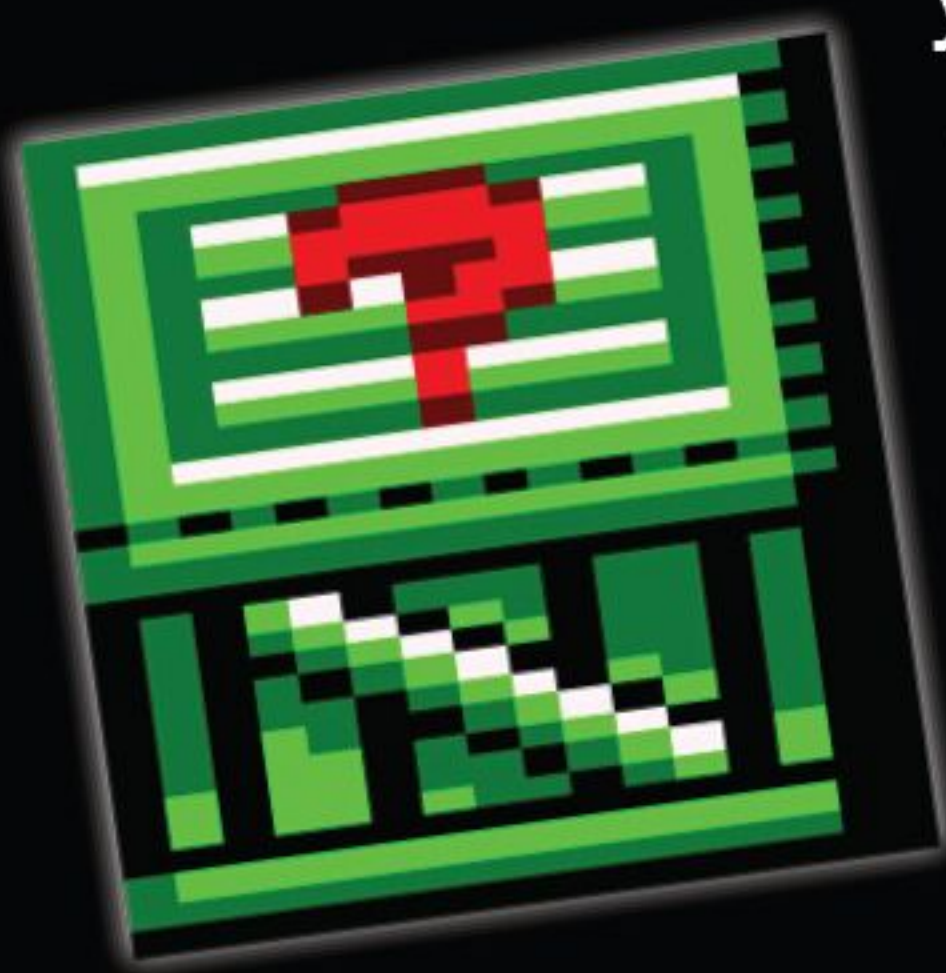
1ST PLACE



Author: CNG Soft
Released: 2023

Top secret plans have been stolen by a hostile enemy nation, and it's up to you to get them back. Hidden in a tightly guarded military compound, the secret plans are being held within a large safe box made of special alloys that only a skilled explosives expert can open. Thankfully, this skill happens to be on your resume, so off to battle we go! But hold on just a minute, this isn't

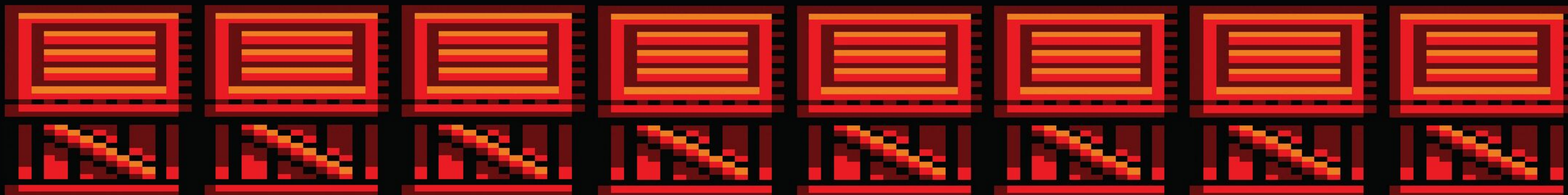
your all-guns-a-blazing affair, oh no. Stealth and cunning are the keys here, should you wish to achieve your



Above: Try to avoid the many guards in order to remain undetected. That's easier said than done however in Alloy Box.

objective. First on the to-do list is to find a machine, as to begin with all you have are your fists. Next, you have to locate the relevant colour-coded keycard in order to gain access to the next section of the compound, of which there are four areas.

Make it to the last one, and you'll need to find some explosives before blowing the Alloy Box. With the plans secure, it will then be a matter of making good your escape. All the aforementioned items, bar the secret plans, can be found in green crates marked with a red question mark. You'll



Colin

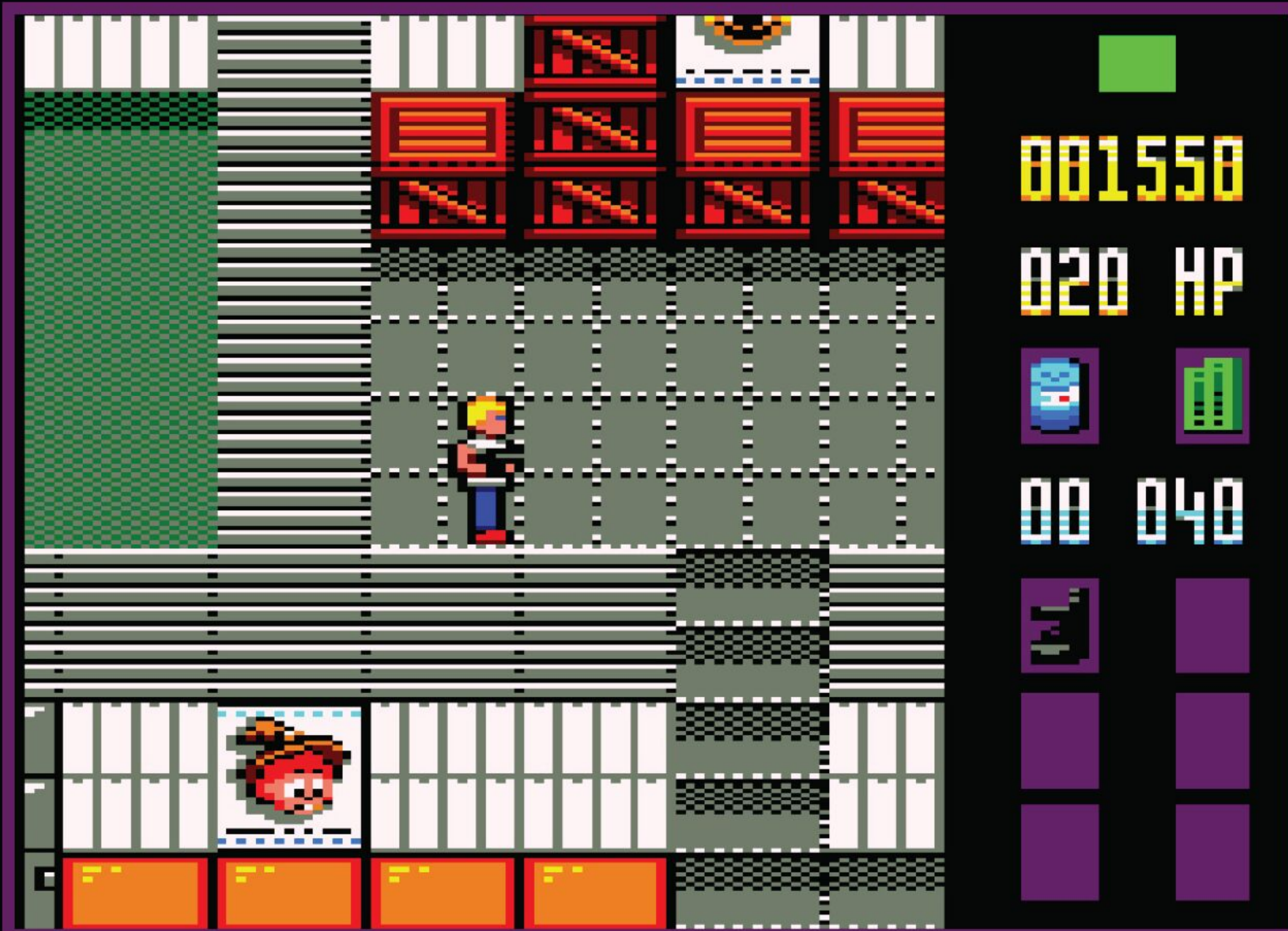


CRITICISM

A stealth game? No. Trying to be stealthy in Alloy Box is nigh on impossible. Guards don't have a set pattern and appear out of nowhere, even in rooms where, two seconds ago, no one else was present. Later areas have long open corridors where bumping into a guard is unavoidable, and it's at this point all stealth goes out the window and it's back to good old run and gun time. That said, though, the gun is useless, merely stunning the more powerful guards and taking way too many bullets to finally finish them. Your fists, however, are lethal, and one punch kills an enemy regardless of how powerful they are. A great concept but one that needs worked on. At present, it doesn't work.



also come across ammo for your gun and tins of food, which will automatically replenish your hit points should they run out. Treading slowly and following the guards is the best way to get around undetected, but this is easier said than done, as



Above: Hey, check out that poster. A nod to *Super Cauldron*, one of the ways to score extra points in this years #CPC RetroDev.

they seem to appear out of nowhere at times. If you are seen, the alarm

Zoë



CRITICISM

It's hard to do a stealth action game like *Metal Gear Solid* on a system that swapped out natural colours for intense pop art shades. Still, this is a surprisingly fun stealth game that's a got a lot to offer, despite the occasional bout of fiendish difficulty. The game moves smoothly, and fighting is fun, even if you're technically not supposed to be doing that. Finding all the items and getting through the game is quite a challenge, so don't expect to finish this any time soon. If you're into and enjoy stealth games, then you'll not want to miss *Alloy Box*!

sounds, and they swarm around you like flies. Time to find a corner to hide in until the alarm indicator changes back to green and you can go back to stealth mode, although it won't be long until the alarm is ringing once more.



PRESENTATION 55%

Simple title screen. Handy manual in both English and Spanish.

GRAPHICS 83%

Lovely visuals and a good use of the CPC's colour palette.

SOUND 62%

Simple sounds effects and a decent music track.

ADDICTIVENESS 65%

Once you learn the layout you want to play again and progress.

LASTABILITY 60%

Ditch trying to be stealthy and just go for it.

OVERALL
65%



Author: **Voxel Tower**

Released: **2023**

Trying to create an open-world game in 64k is a hardcore move. Doing it within the limits of a game jam is simply stunning. Voxel Tower not only produced *Sugar City* for #CPC RetroDev 2023, but they came second!

You play as Sarah, who comes to assist her mother in the “sugar” business over in Sugar City. Despite its name, sugar is hard to get in Sugar City, and rival groups are trying to corner the

market. You’ve got MC Roland, the Police, the “Arcade Boys” (complete with Pac-Man on their cars), and



the devious Mayor, Alan Sugar. Their roving gangs will plague you in your attempts to control the sugar business.

This is a *Grand Theft Auto* clone, and that means spray booths to hide your car from the police, a wanted level that will see the fuzz going all-out to destroy you, weapons hidden all around the map, and an indicator to help you navigate this detailed game world.

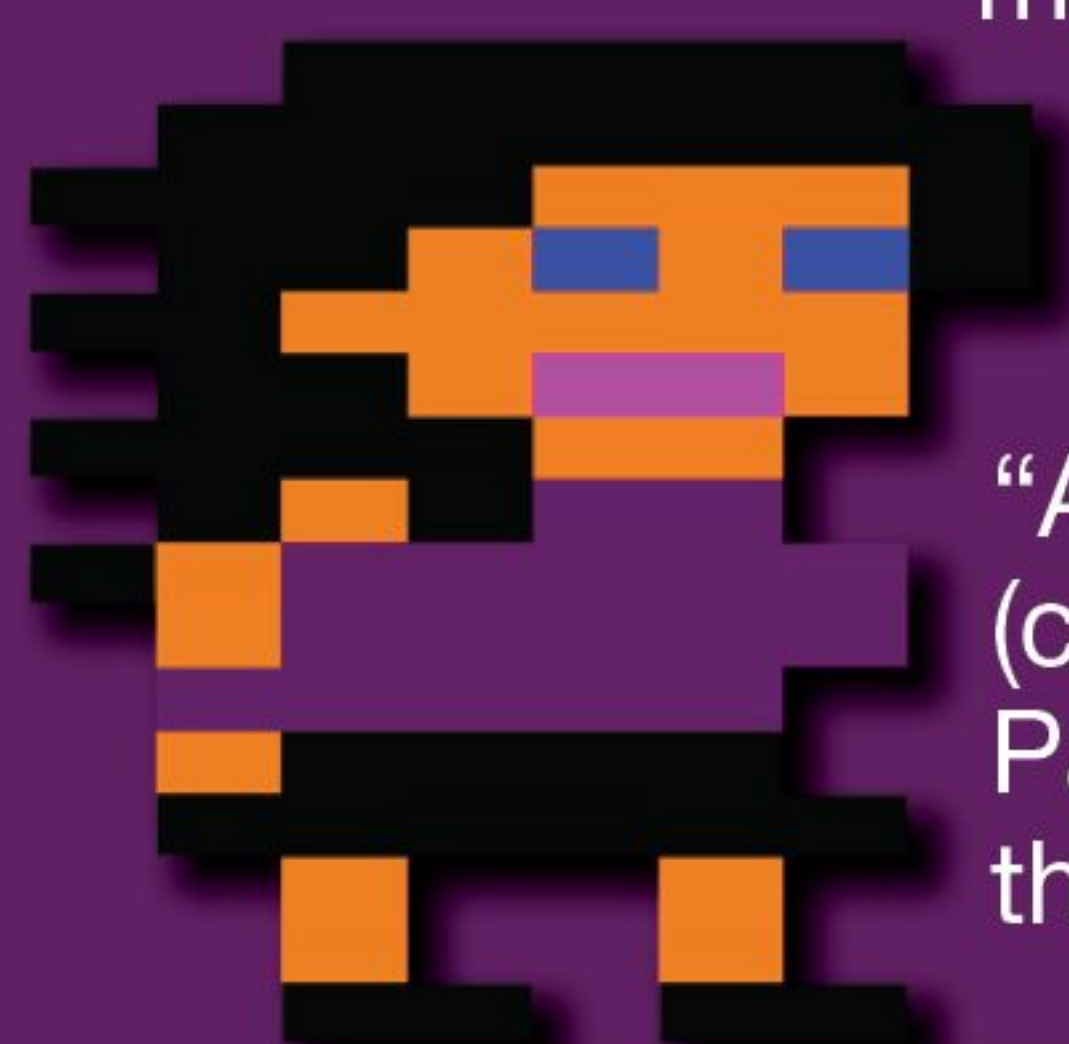
Driving isn’t too hard. Once you get the hang of it, the game follows the feel of the old



top-down *GTA* games. The biggest issue you’ll likely have is getting used to how the play area wobbles while you move. This game makes heavy use of CRT effects to get full-screen, fluid scrolling in all directions. It takes a little time to adjust to this, but stick with it and the game will reward you.

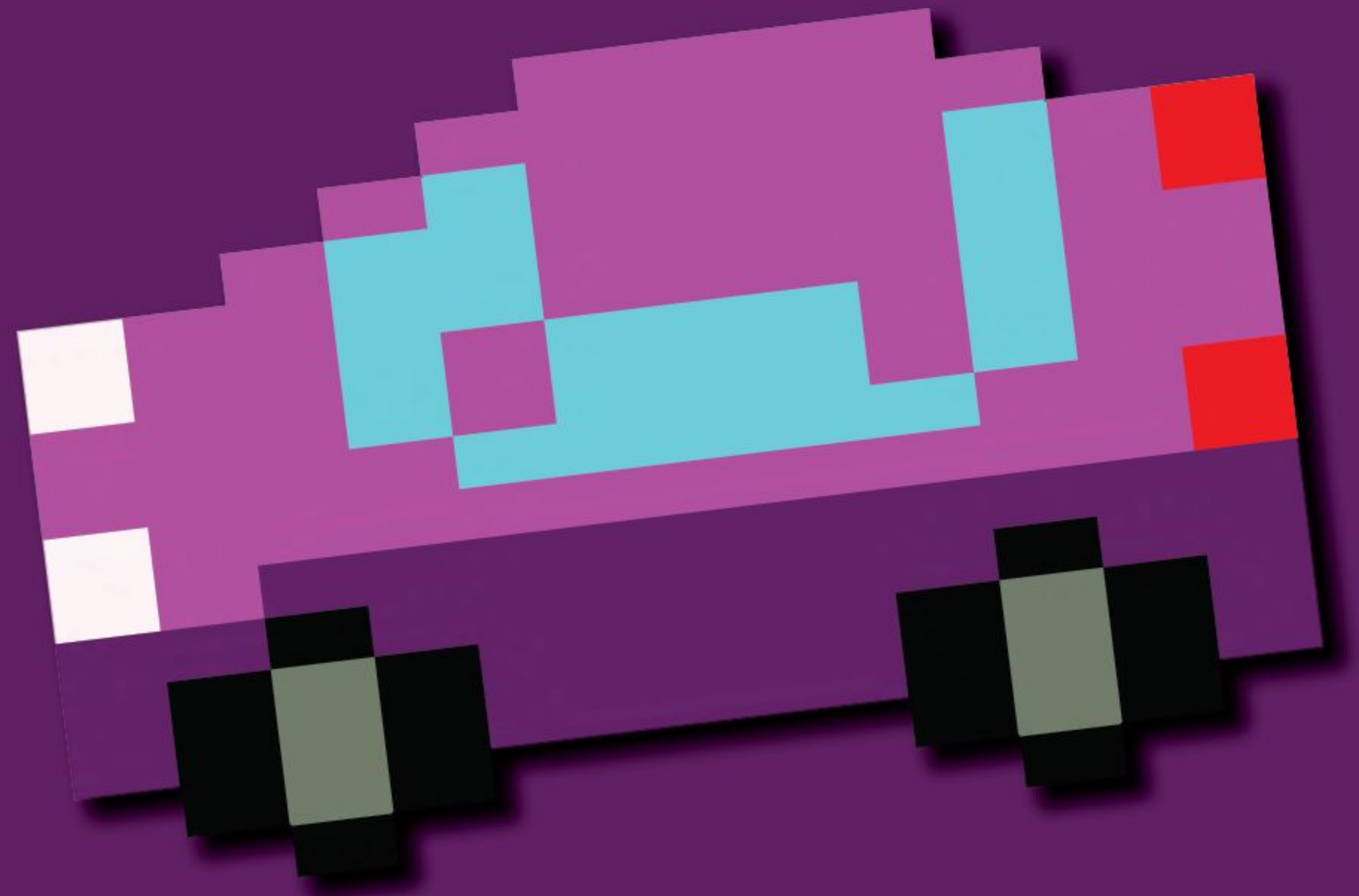
The soundtrack is excellent. There’s a lovely tune playing throughout. Graphically, it’s superb. All the factions are distinct, the buildings are easily recognisable, and there’s a day/night cycle that helps breathe life into the

Review by Zoë Kirk-Robinson



2ND PLACE

#CPC RetroDev GAME CREATION CONTEST



Zoë



This game is a true gem. Yes, the screen flicker is annoying, but once you get into the game, it's a lot of fun nevertheless. Some of the controls take a little getting used to (you have to hold the fire button for a second then release it to get into or out of a car, for example), but that's simply down to the need for the game to work on a single-button joystick as well as keyboard or GX4000 gamepad. In a world of platformers and side-scrollers, this is a true go-anywhere, do-anything sandbox that lets you simply run wild and enjoy the game. It's a must-play.

CRITICISM

map. Car headlights actually work, illuminating the dark streets in front of you in real-time.

The only downside is that screen wobble and flickering sprites. Voxel Tower suggests playing on a real CPC for the best results, but having done that, I'm sorry to say the flicker is still present. It's much less noticeable on a Plus machine, however.

Despite the small flaws,

this is a game that absolutely must be played. Give it a chance, and you'll get sucked in. Few titles come along that demonstrate the sheer power of the Amstrad. This is one of them.

Gordon



What a brave attempt to bring a GTA-like world to the CPC. For a video game city to truly shine, it has to feel alive and real. Just think about Turbo Esprit – back in 1986, it nailed that fantastic vibe, making the whole experience feel genuinely organic. There's a lot going on in Sugar City, and I love all the different factions who are determined to see you fail at your attempt to be the queen of the sugar trade. That said, I'm not a fan of the game's annoying flickering; it's rather unsettling for the eyes. While I haven't had the opportunity to test it on authentic hardware as of now, when played on the recommended emulator (Retro Virtual Machine), it tends to be a bit strobe-like and jerky. Despite this, considering the development time, this is incredibly impressive and, with a bit of work, could be amazing!

CRITICISM



Above: Night time in Sugar City. The game features a day / night cycle.



PRESENTATION 80%

An incredible achievement marred by screen flicker.

GRAPHICS 95%

Day-night cycles and excellent graphics. Fantastic!

SOUND 90%

Catchy music and workable spot sounds.

ADDICTIVENESS 90%

Get past the screen flicker and you're in for the long haul.

LASTABILITY 95%

This is going to take a long time to beat. A monumental achievement in 64k.

OVERALL 90%

Potion's Potions

Author: **Leosoft**
Released: **2023**

We've all been in Paulina's situation and were minding our own business, just out for a lovely stroll, when you happen across the holy grail microcomputer at a garage sale. We pause to take notice, and every instinct tells us to buy it, but then realise there's no cash on hand. The bargain of the century cannot slip us by, and we will beg, borrow, and steal to get the funds for this. This is the dilemma poor Paulina finds herself in - desperate to buy a CPC 646 that is calling her name. It sits there like discarded junk, unloved and up

for sale. Firstly, she must find out its price and then hunt for diamonds to pay for it, which are scattered throughout the town. The play area is fraught with much peril,

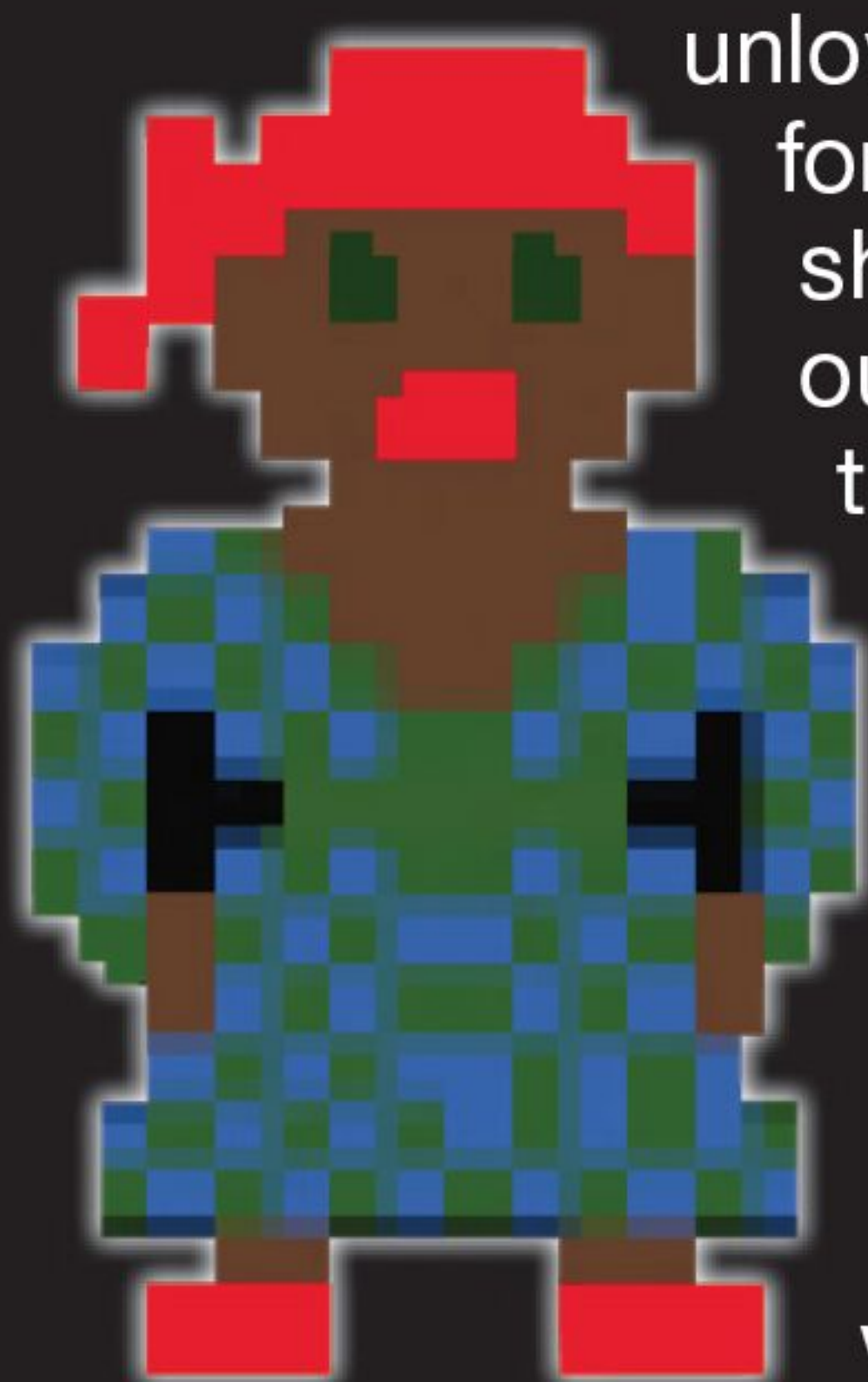


and if it wasn't for Paulina's arcane art of brewing magic potions, she'd have no chance of collecting these precious stones. The trick in this game is to use the foraged ingredients wisely, in

accordance with her book of potions, to make the correct spells at the right time. This will enable her (amongst others) to pass through fire, walk on water, and breathe through a toxic mist. Doing



Above: Going underground! Paulina finds herself in many weird and wonderful locations all with spell ingredients to collect.



Review by Gordon King

3RD PLACE



Gordon



CRITICISM

What immediately catches the eye in *Paulina's Potions* is how brilliantly the game plays with the CPC colour palette. It's downright grand, with a generous burst of vibrant hues that really make it pop out. Due to its colour-flipping effect in Mode 1, you start to hallucinate colours that don't exist. While colours alone don't define a game, I'm delighted to inform you that this adventure is an imaginative platformer designed for thoughtful players. Going in gung-ho is certain death, and not planning your recipes as you progress is folly. You will spend as much time in the potion book as you will exploring the land; if you think planning a week's worth of meals in an ad-hoc fashion as you shop in Lidl is hard, wait till you try this. The jumping mechanics take a bit of getting used to, and until you fathom them out, you will have some untimely deaths. While the play area isn't expansive, the challenges it presents guarantee players a considerable amount of longevity and genuine enjoyment. This is most worthy of coming in the top 3 position of the 2023 #CPC Retrodev Competition.

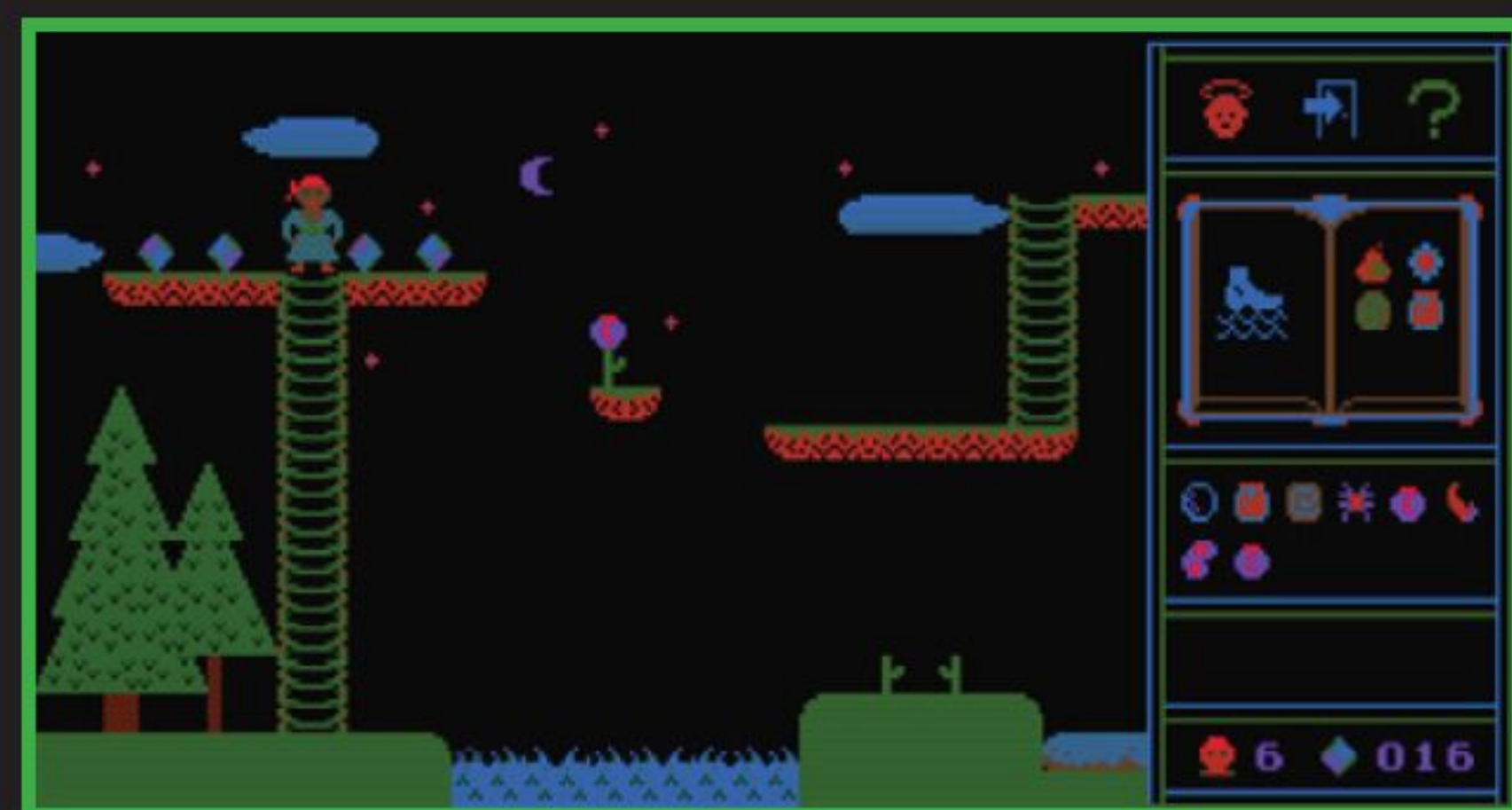
Chris



CRITICISM

Hot on the heels of *Druid & Droid* from last year, Leosoft return with a polished and enjoyable platformer in which their graphical style has been turned up to 11! A platform game that needs planning and thinking, *Paulina's* potion mixing adventures capture some excellent gameplay elements of puzzle solving and memory, all presented in the mode 1 'interlaced blending' function the CPC has. The combination of high detail and an expanded palette is lovely to see, and works well with the world created for *Paulina*. Lots of different tunes are included too, so there is lots here to really draw you in. Well designed and thought out, it may not be the longest of games, but it's fun while it lasts.

things in the wrong order will ensure her supply of raw ingredients dries up, and she will be left stranded with nowhere to go. Only the most studious in herblore will ensure they will be playing 8-bit games by the end of the day.



Above: Many of the locations have a puzzle to solve with a spell - but which one?

PRESENTATION 88%

Great manual, extra dev manual and considering the development time, this feels like a full package.

GRAPHICS 88%

Bold, colourful and detailed. A joy to look at.

SOUND 70%

A few average tunes, and some spot effects

ADDICTIVENESS 85%

You will be determined to figure out the right order to use your recipes.

LASTABILITY 80%

This is no casual game, and it will challenge the player to do better.

OVERALL 82%

AMSTRAD ACTION



CHRISTMAS COVER-TAPES



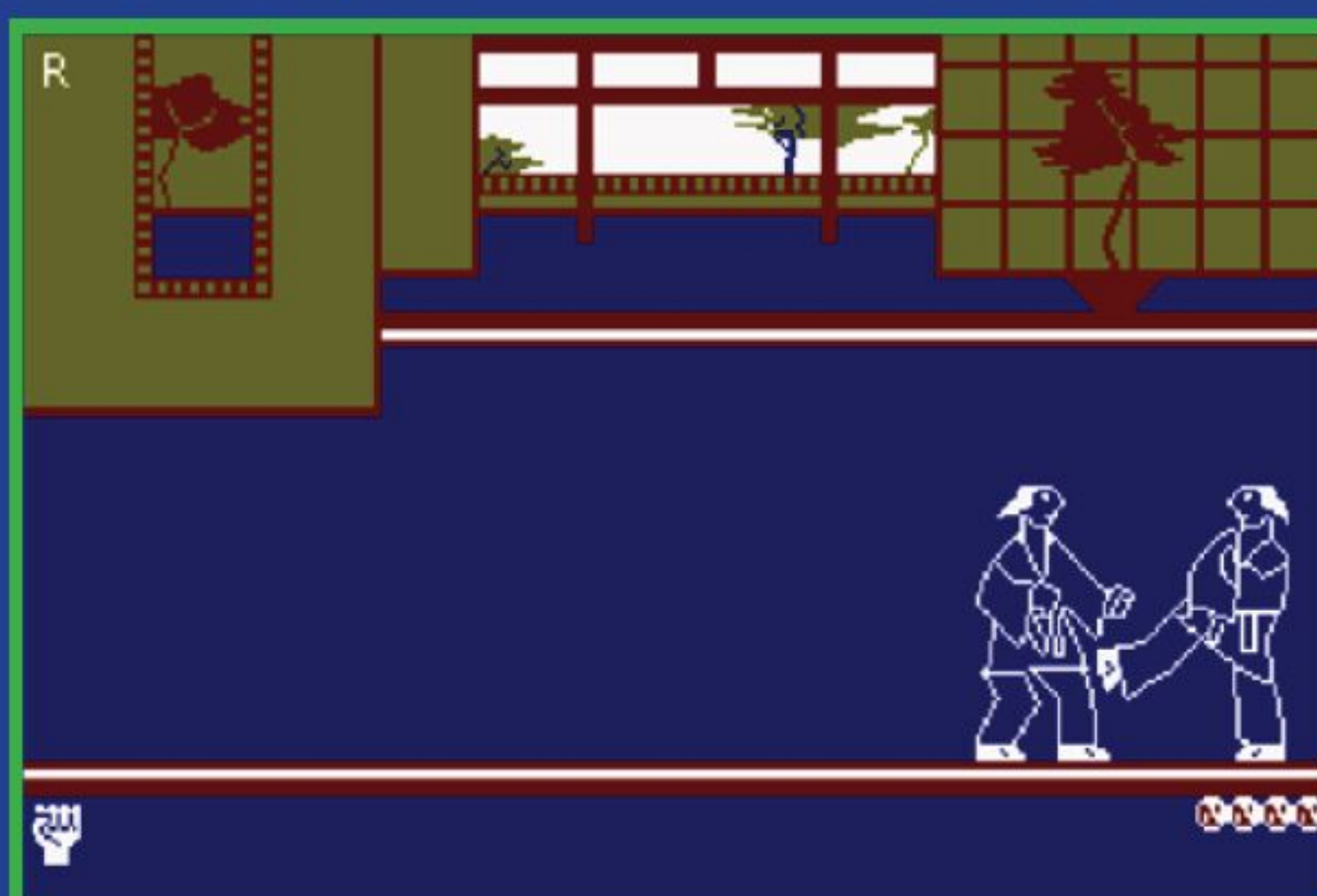
It's Christmas! There's a new issue of Amstrad Action in the shops, and there's a tape on the cover. What a treat! Cheaper than a Mastertronic game (until Xmas '90), it was packed with type-ins, game demos, and sometimes entire games. Sean McManus looks at the software AA wrapped up for us.

Christmas 1985



For issue #4, Amstrad Action treated us to its first Christmas covertape. The cover screamed "Mega Gift", which seemed a bit cheeky given the price went up

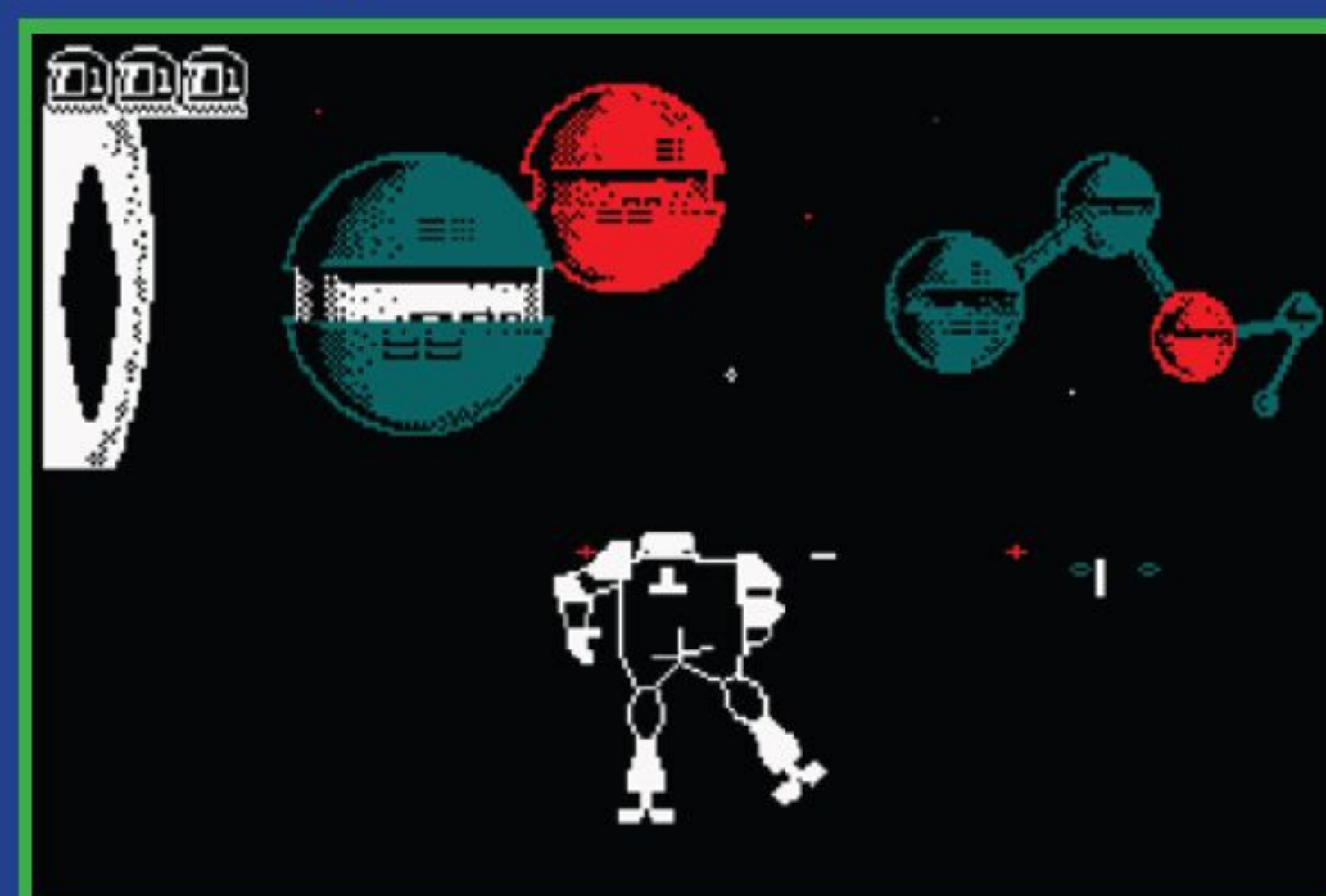
by 50p to cover the cost of the tape. There were two



previously unreleased games from Ocean: *Kung Fu*, and *Number 1*.

Kung Fu might have had some appeal as a launch title for the Amstrad in 1984. With its four moves and lack of jumping, it seemed primitive at the end of 1985, even as a freebie. For context, that same issue

had *Yie Ar Kung-Fu* as its Mastergame. The music in



Kung Fu was atmospheric, though, in that it made you want to smash things up.

In *Number 1*, you rollerblade your way through space, collecting jewels and dodging obstacles. I'm guessing the developers had a sports sim and a space game that weren't quite working so they mashed them together.

For you this Christmas

THE ALL ACTION COVER CASSETTE

Love, Amstrad Action and Ocean Software

Sooner or later in every close relationship the time comes to be generous. To give the person you care for something just a bit special. We've grown very attracted to you, our readers over the last few months and we thought, well, just this once, er, we'd try to make you happy. Please accept this small token of our affection. We really do think you'll like these games from Ocean Software. In our humble opinion they're up to the standard of programs you can pay pounds for over the counter. Super graphics. Exciting action. Hours of entertainment for you this Christmas.

From AA with love xxx.

The result? One highly original game that also doesn't quite work. The eccentricity and look of the game have a certain early-era charm, but your character blocks your view of the obstacles. The real Christmas number 1 that year was Shakin' Stevens with "Merry Christmas Everyone".

Christmas 1986



On the second AA of Christmas, my tape deck gave to me: some ads that unfolded tediously. I only loaded that bit once (and my tape's broken now), but I remember paging through seemingly endless text descriptions and screenshots of games, wondering when I got to join in.

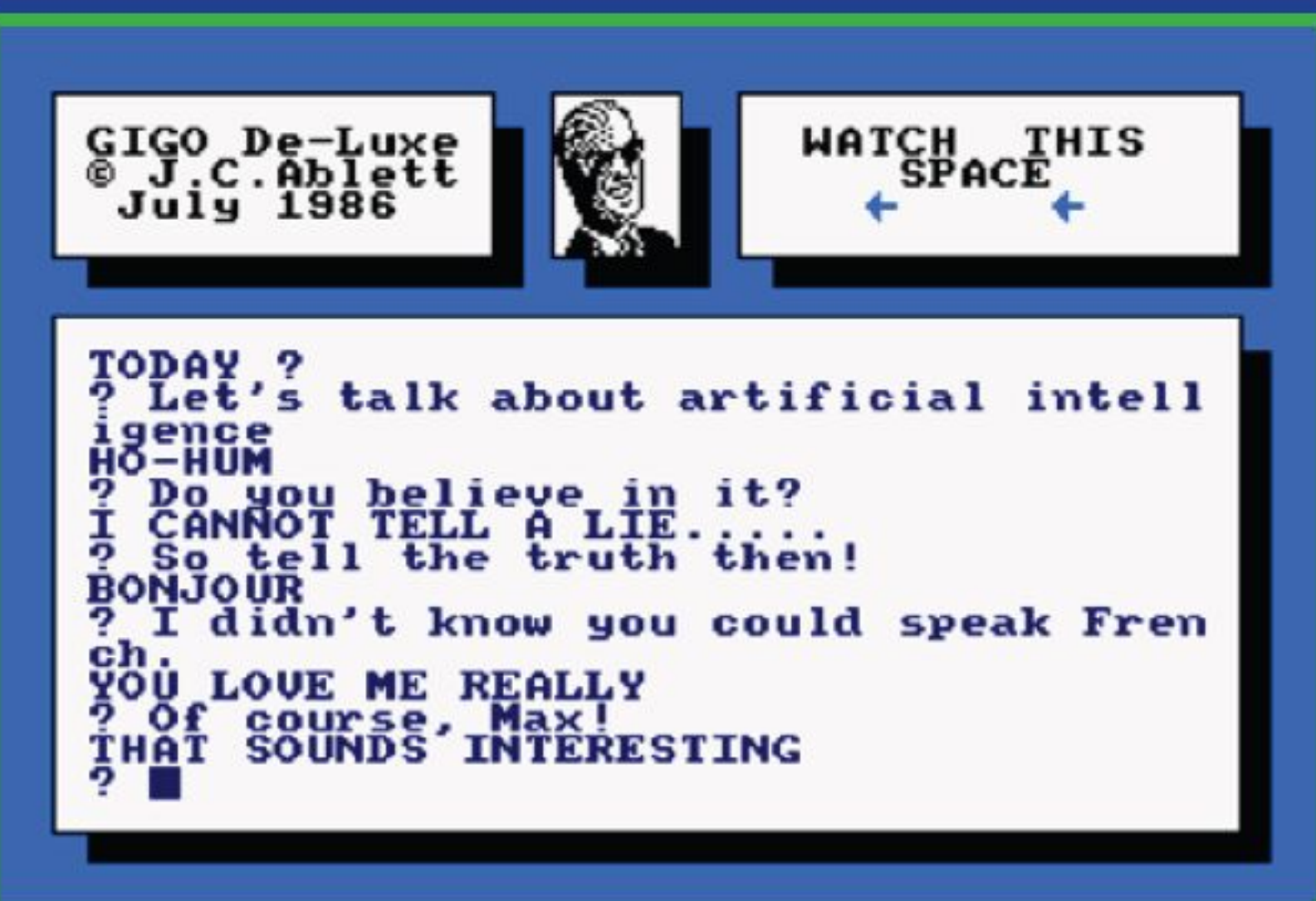
Eventually, I found the good bit: a playable level of the previous month's Mastergame, *Druid*. It's a



dungeon crawler similar to the Christmas Mastergame, *Gauntlet*. It must have irked US Gold to see their main rival on the tape in the same issue where they're reviewed.

Although *Gauntlet* remains my favourite, you spend less time wading through swarms of enemies in *Druid*, which is an improvement.

On the flip side were some of AA's best type-ins, including a database and ramdisk. *Blitter* bounced a large rotating ball around the screen, amusingly emulating a well-known Amiga demo. *Drumkit* was an excellent three-channel drum sequencer. As I write

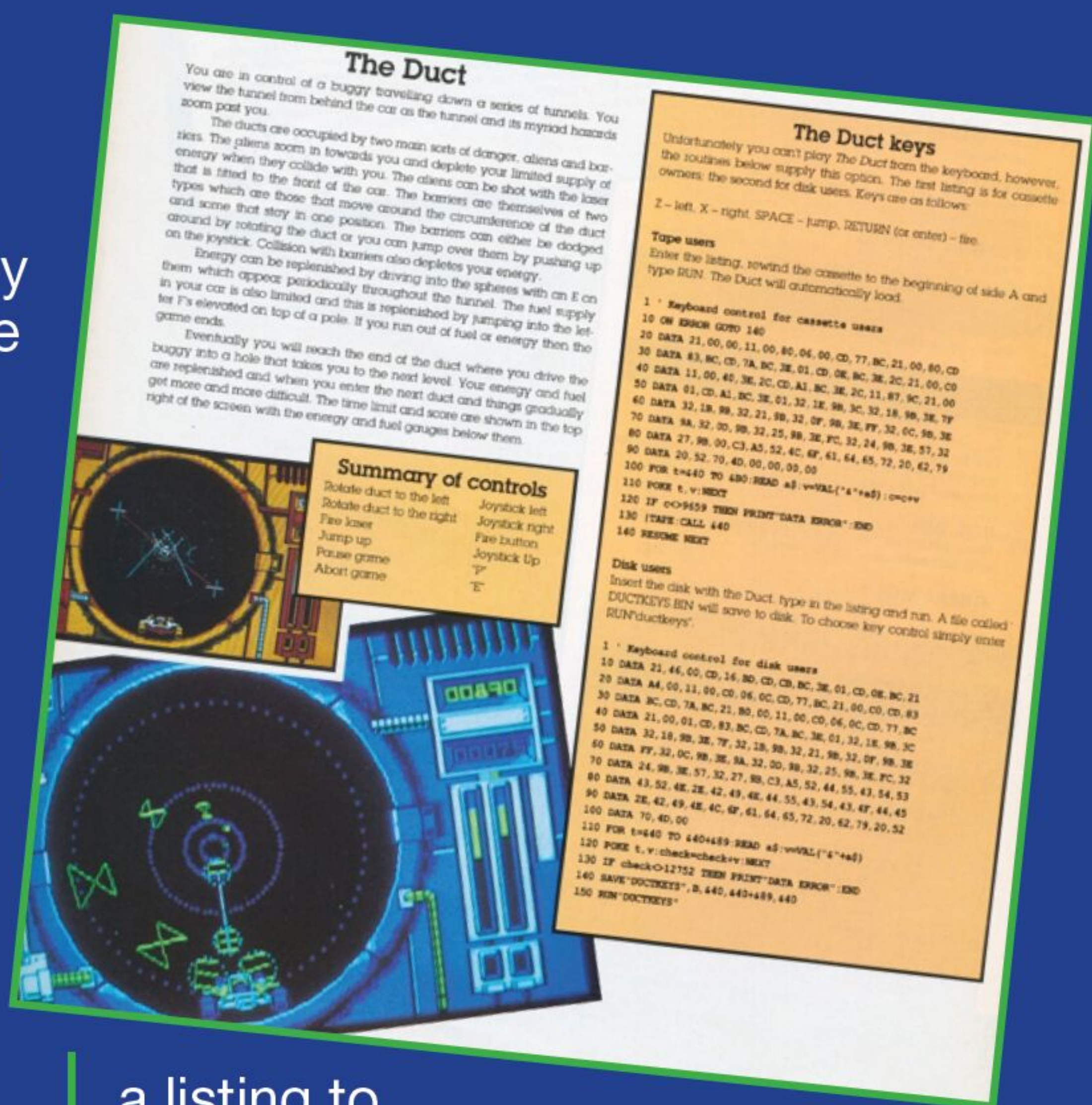


this, I can hear the default beat in my head. *GIGO* was a fun chatbot where you conversed with *Max Headroom* (see issue 8 of *AmtixCPC* for more on this one). I'd already typed all of these in, but it's nice that those with lazy fingers didn't miss out.

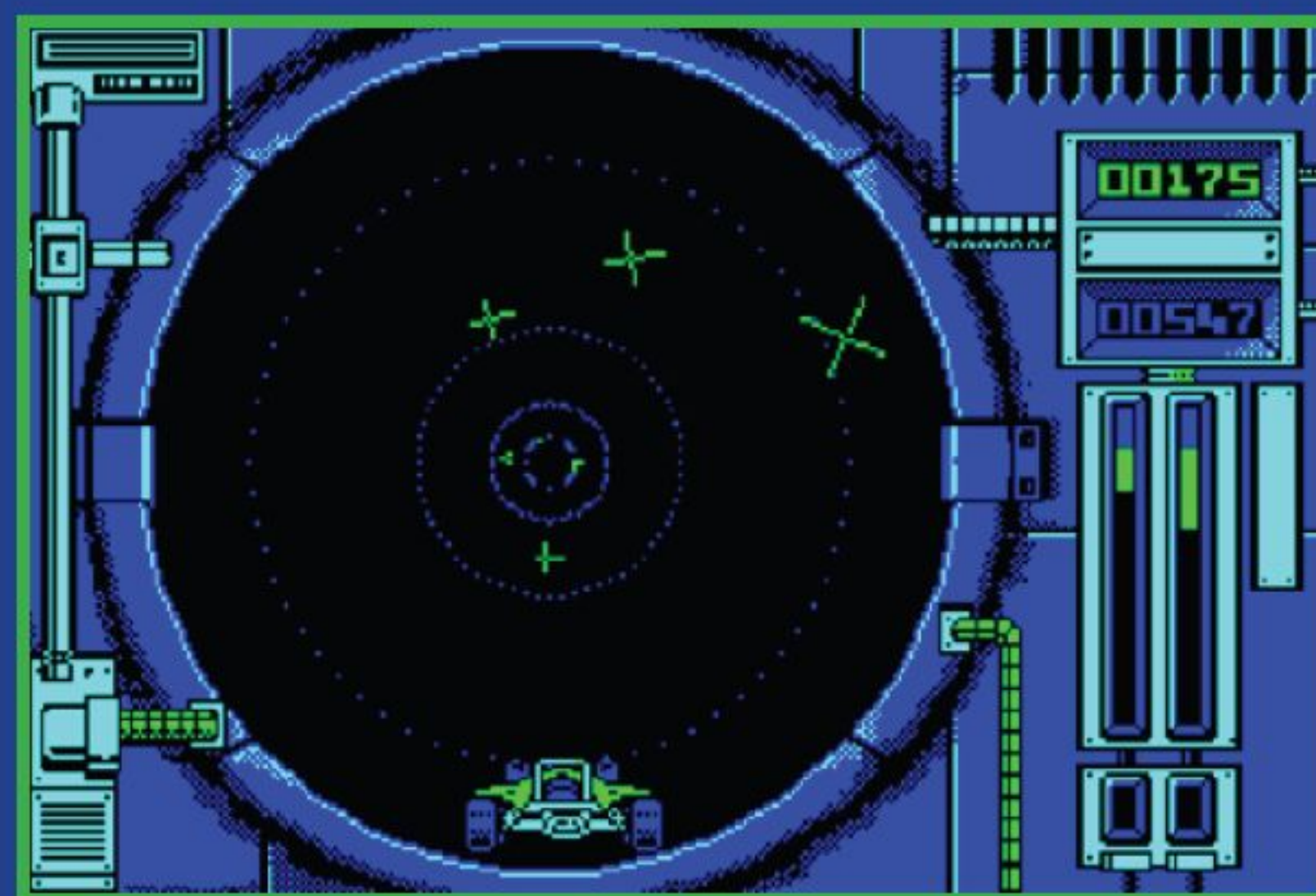
Christmas 1987



As readers love type-ins, so let's have one to make the covertape work properly! This month's gift was a game called *The Duct*, an exclusive from Gremlin. Unfortunately, they forgot to program keyboard controls, so the mag included



a listing to get them working. In this simple but fun game, you navigate your buggy down a tube, jumping over obstacles and shooting things. The vector graphics look great when you spin the tube. (If you download it to try this Christmas, the keys are Q, E, Space, Fire).



This tape also included type-ins. *Thoughtlink* was a tool for organizing ideas, and there was another database to store your Christmas card list. As long you didn't know more than 125 people, that is.

The best type-in here was *Sound Digitizer*, which enabled you to sample audio tapes and replay them in your BASIC programs. Oh, I had so much fun with this. I created remixes of Crazy Nights by Kiss and Doctorin' the House by Coldcut and Yazz. It ate up all the memory, but I could loop the repetitive bits and get nearly

a minute of scratchy audio together.

Christmas 1987



What does a barber totally do? *Total Eclipse*. Never mind.

For Christmas 1988, AA gave away a demo version of the third Freescape game, *Total Eclipse*. Freescape was a technique for creating solid 3D worlds, viewed from a first-



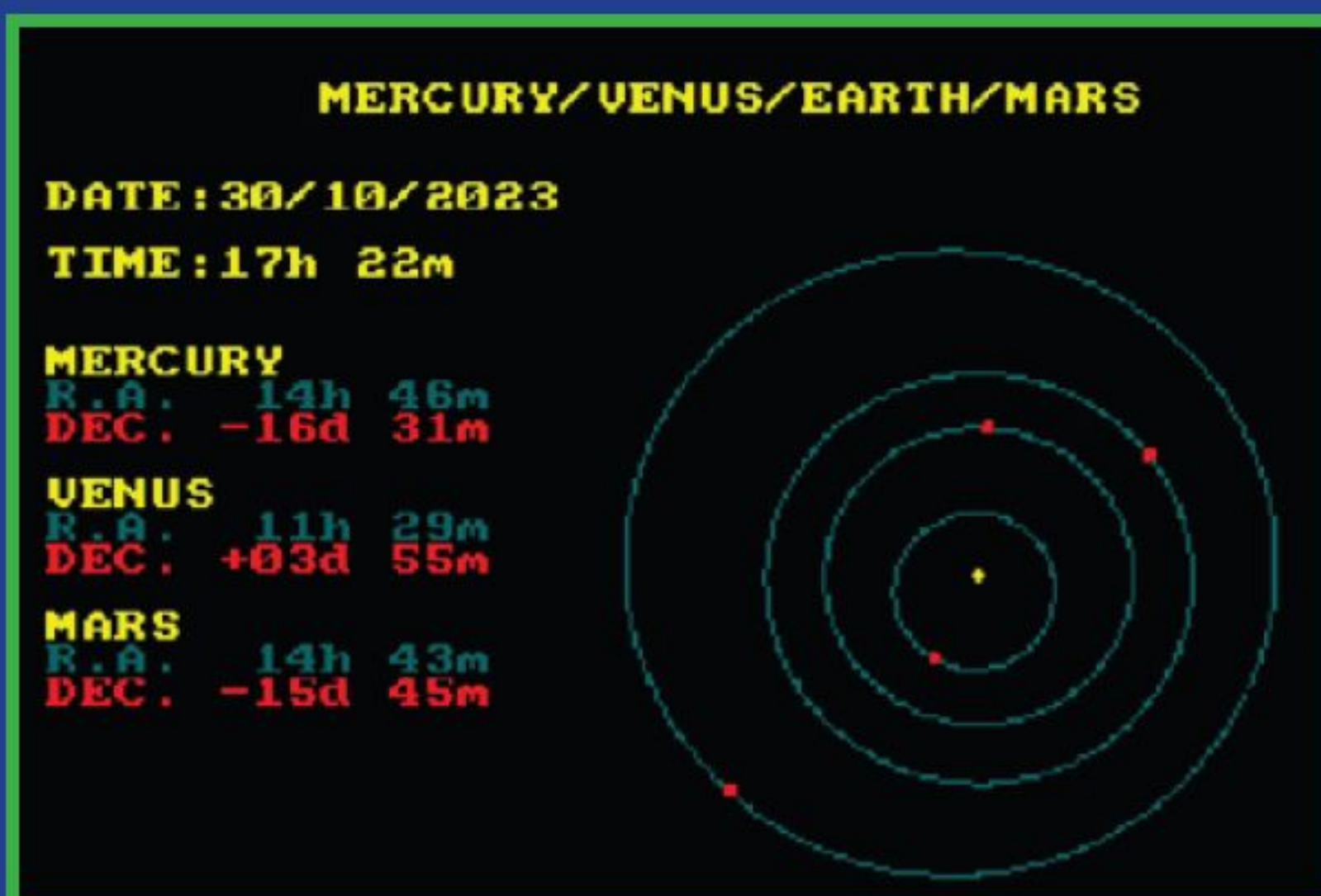
person perspective. It was graphically astounding. My favourite feature in *Total Eclipse* is that you can press a key to have a nice rest and slow your heartbeat.

Just what I needed after battling through Woolworths for the Christmas shopping.

The other side of the tape had some new



reader programs. *Isotopes* was a colourful and fast version of *Snake*. *Solar System* plotted the position of the planets for a given time. *Gibberish* spouted nonsense sentences, such



as “The flavoursome banana jestingly howled with the stupid running shoe.” No idea why that program exists.

It wouldn't be Christmas without a new database, of course. You use this one to keep track of AA reviews, compiling your own index and noting important comments. Only two people ever thought that was a good use of time: the person who wrote the program, and the person who put it on the tape.

Christmas 1989



Dear Santa. Here's a letter I wrote using my new word processor from the AA Christmas tape.”

Also in this month's selection box were a program for playing crosswords, and a program for avoiding them. That second one caught your errors in type-ins. *Gunslinger* gave you a two-player clone of cowboy shooting game *Boot Hill*.



The main attraction this year was Level 3 of *The Untouchables* by Ocean, based on the film of the same name.

Outside of sports sims, there aren't many games like this where you play a real, named person. In this case, it's Eliot Ness, an American agent trying to bring down gangster Al Capone. In this free level, you must shoot the baddies as they appear at the windows trying to shoot you. The game looks and sounds first class, but the targeting is slow, making it frustrating.

Christmas 1990

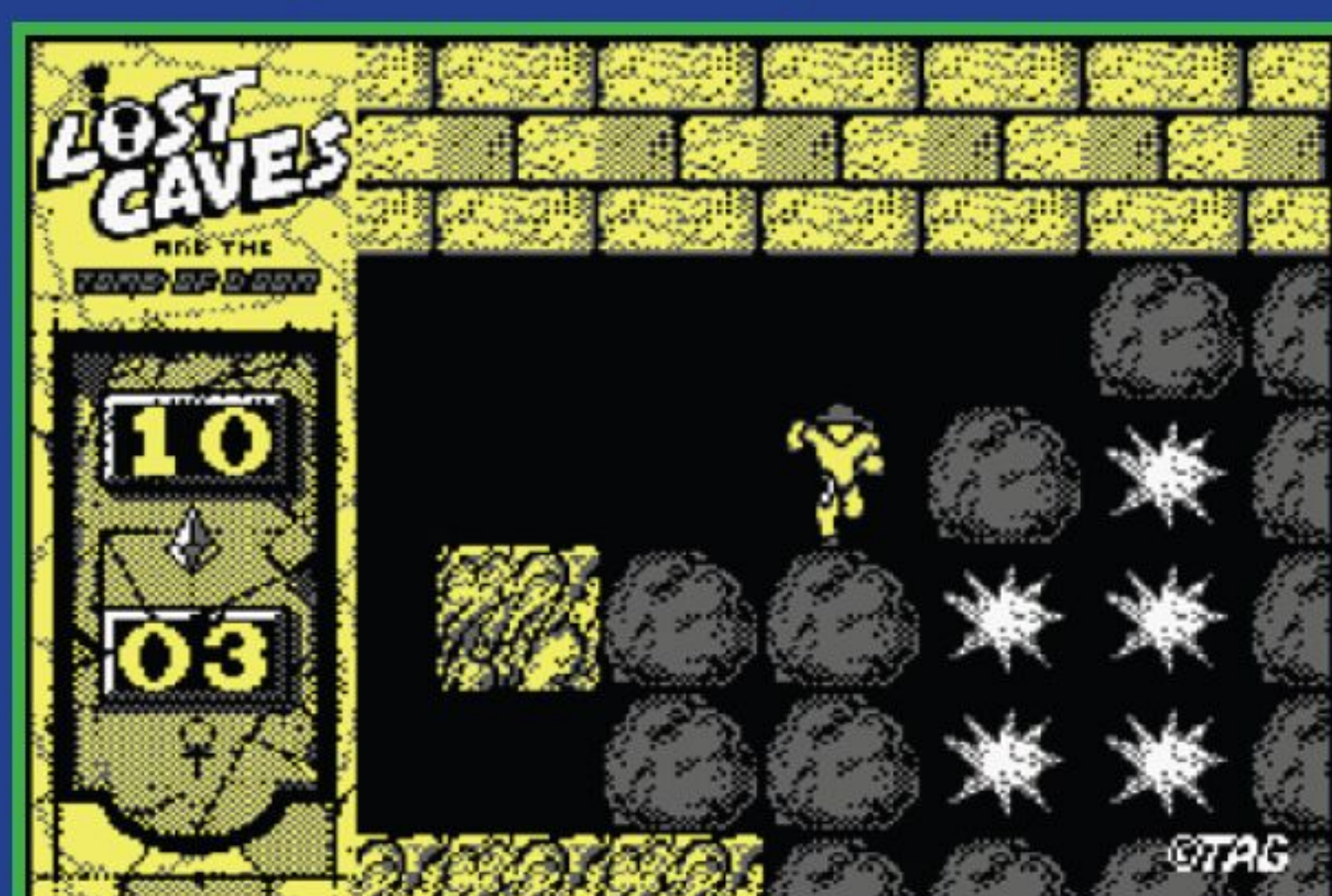
Lots of fun on this tape! First up, a demo of *Puzznic*. It's a pattern-matching puzzle game with gravity. Nowadays, there's an app for that. This playable demo starts off



teaching you the game mechanics but soon gets tricky.



While last year saw the third film in the original Indiana Jones trilogy hit cinemas, this Christmas saw a game inspired by the character on the covertape. *Lost Caves* was written by AA reviews editor Adam Waring before he joined the



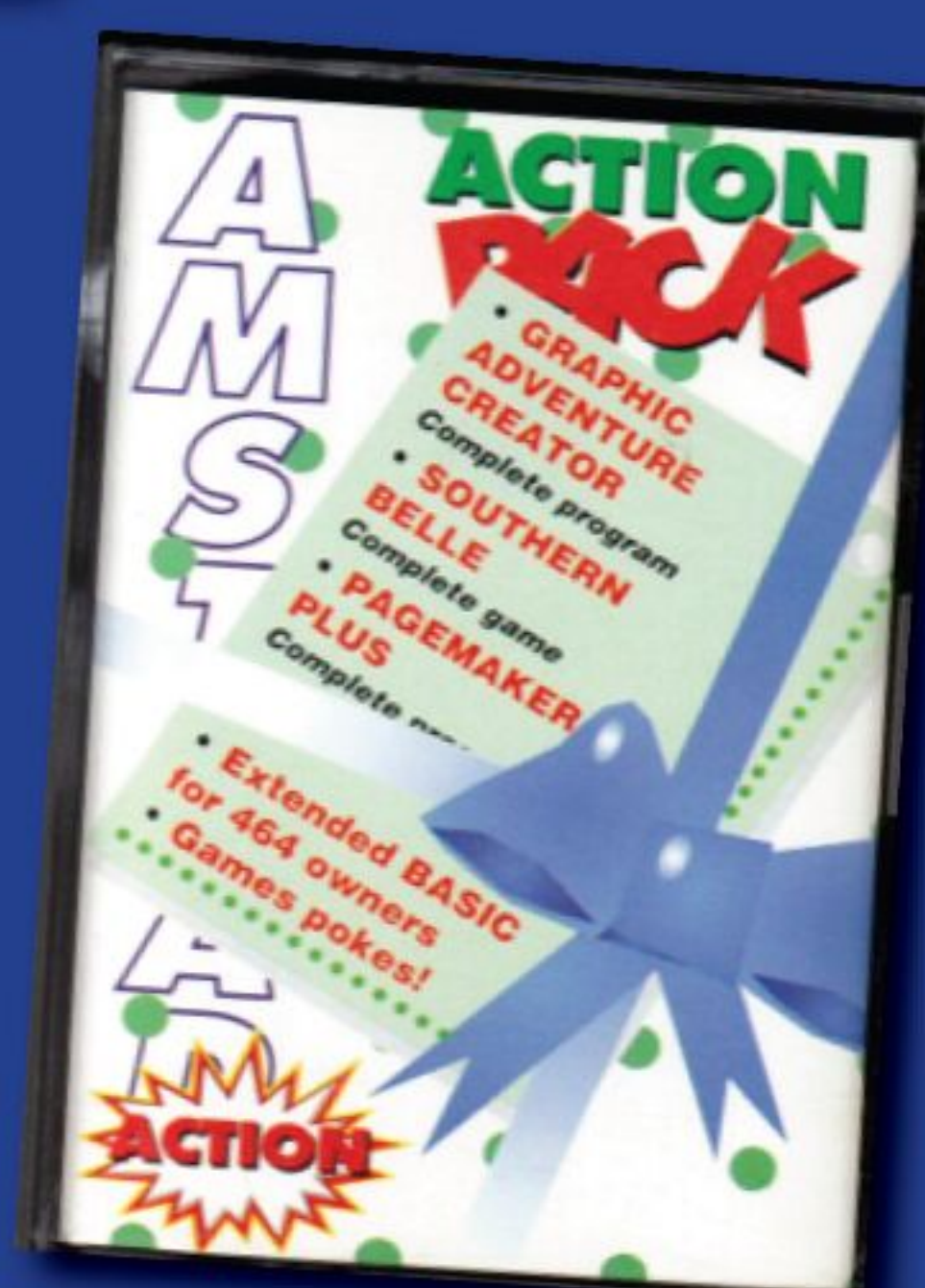
mag. It's a nicely presented *Boulderdash* clone, but with level designs that make it too easy to get trapped. Progress relies heavily on trial and error and replay.

Space Froggy sees our amphibian hero tackling the 6128 ROM shortage by collecting chips. It is a fast and colourful platform game, and a great showcase for Glenco's *Sprites Alive* package and BASIC compiler. This would have made a good budget game with a big enough map.



Christmas 1991

By now, Amstrad Action carried a tape every issue, so what would they do for Christmas? They led with *Graphic Adventure Creator*, which enabled readers to write adventure games without a deep technical knowledge. I remember being quite pleased to see it on the tape at the time, and I ordered the manual.



For most readers, it was probably an odd choice for a Christmas tape when you want a simple slice of fun to go with your turkey sandwiches. *Pagemaker Plus*, too, probably didn't tear anyone away from the Queen's speech.

The only game on the tape was *Southern Belle*, an AA Rave in November 1985. It enables you to



live the boyhood dream of generations past as you drive a steam train from London to Brighton. Working out how to use the cut-off, regulator, and vacuum brake is a challenge, but many of those who persevered loved the game. It's relaxing to watch the train puff away



on demo mode, and I was pleased to see the iconic Battersea Power Station when I pulled out from London.

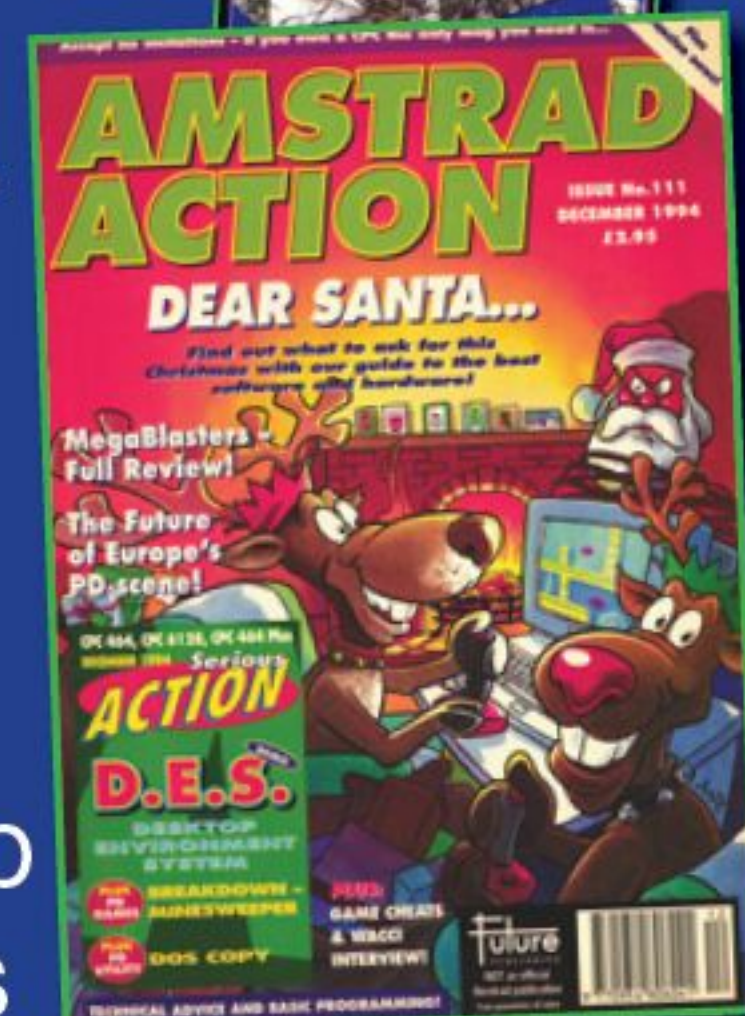
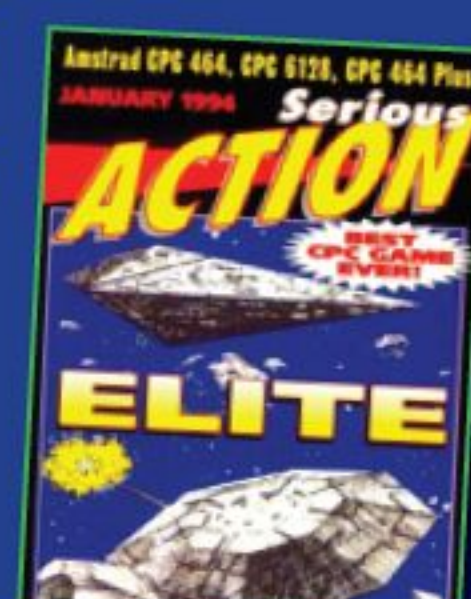
Around this time, other AA tapes featured more accessible games such as *Firelord*, *Impossaball*, *Tir Na Nog*, *Shockway Rider*, and *Sphinx Jinx*. If I'd been curating this tape, I'd have included one of these at Christmas to pump up the fun factor.

Christmas Future

Amstrad Action featured tapes every issue from here on until the magazine closed. In 1992 and 1993, there was no Christmas-themed issue, just business as usual, although *Elite* was a great covermount for '93. In 1994 there was a fun Santa cover, but the tape was rather dry: a demo of *Desktop Environment System*, a DOS copy utility, and some public domain games.

Through its monthly tapes, AA did a great job of getting classic games and powerful software into wider circulation. Considered like that, AA was the last budget software label for the Amstrad.

For subscribers, the covertapes were a lucky dip. You never knew whether you'd get a much-loved game like *Chuckie Egg* or a utility like *Tasword* in the post. Christmas is a time for surprises, so let's raise a glass and celebrate the joy of covertapes past!





h! Welcome back, fans of adventure, to the one and only AMTIXCPC Tavern. Well done for making it through the recent storms and flooding to the crossroads between AMTIXCPC Towers and the long and winding road that leads to CPC adventure.

Please come in and find some much needed shelter and relief from the cold and wet winter weather by gathering around to our warm open fire. What shall it be today? A tankard of our famous 'Zilog' Ale? Or perhaps something a tad bit stronger, say some of our vintage 6128 Mead? - Good for warming the old

cockles. We haven't been too busy here sadly since the last time you all visited, but we still have some news to share from the world of CPC adventure.

For this, our tenth issue now, I bring you news of a new text adventure from game author Gareth Pitchford called *Pesky Kids!* which, although originally released on the ZX Spectrum,

has finally found its way onto the CPC.

For our review this issue, I get to grips with Greek author Sakis Kaffesakis's new graphic adventure *Rodolfo*, which in my opinion is his best adventure to date.

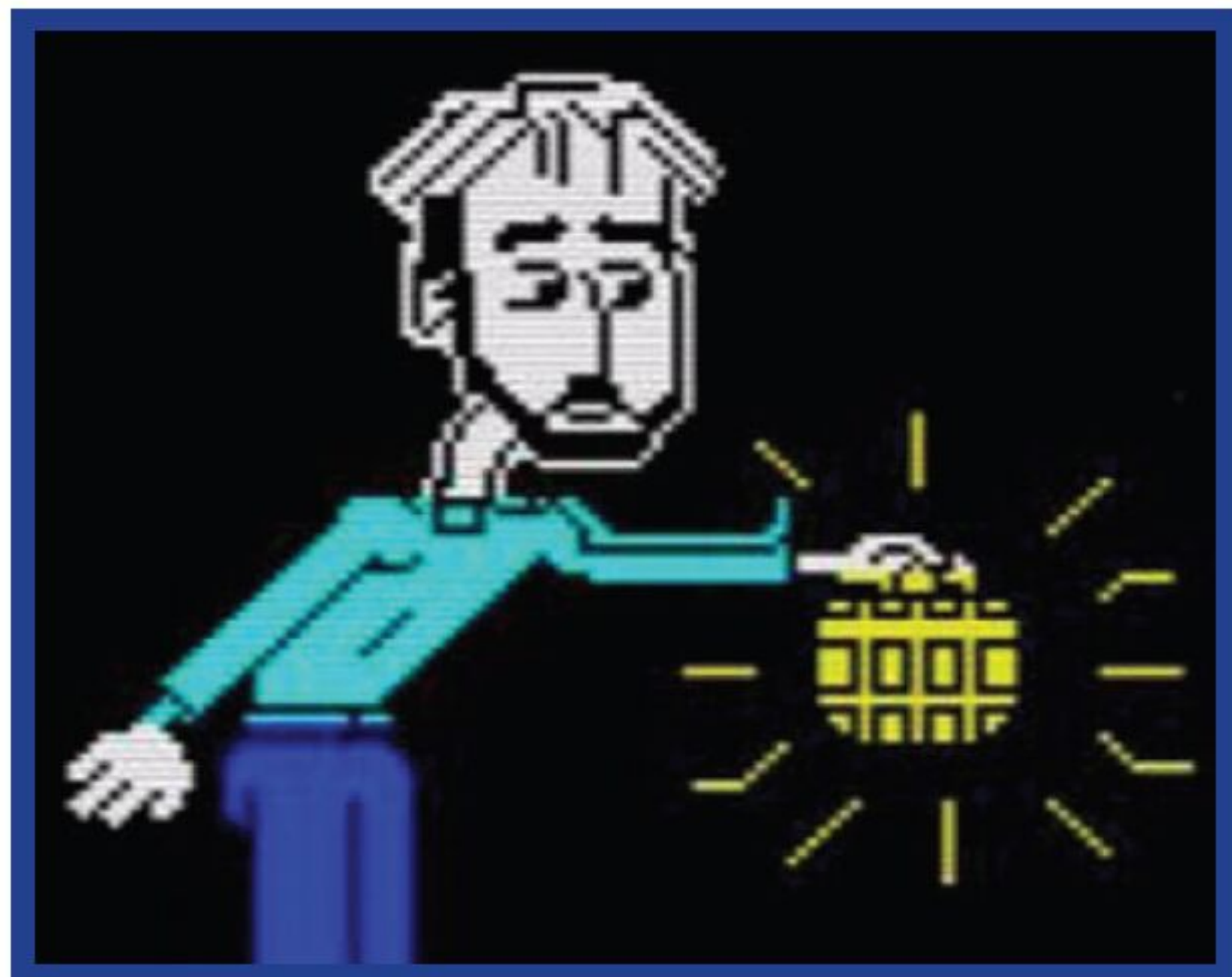
So sit back, relax, enjoy the fire and your libation of choice, and let's move on to this issue's news and review.

Got anything adventure related to share? Working on or developing your own adventure game? Contact the Tavern via amtixcpc@gmail.com



tavern news

NEW TEXT ADVENTURE FOR THE CPC BY SPECCX ADVENTURER!



ou may remember several issues ago we reviewed *Dream Walker*, an excellent

text adventure written by game author and researcher Gareth Pitchford. Well, Gareth is back once again with another text adventure called *Pesky Kids!*

In the game, you take on the role of a security guard whose life would be so much more peaceful if it wasn't for those darn pesky kids! Each year they break into Old Man Hagerty's large house to host their annual Halloween party and create such a mess. This year, though, things will be different, and you've decided that it's you who'll be having all the fun. The game was actually written in 2022, but this year it has been ported over to the CPC utilising the DAAD engine.

Pesky Kids! is currently available for the CPC in .DSK format, the file of which is available for download via Gareth's website which can

The front door of mansion lies to the north, framed by bushes. Paths loop around the house to the east and west. To the south is the driveway.

Exits: S, E, W.

>search bushes
You stubbornly refuse to believe there's a difference between searching and examining.

>examine bushes
Bushy.

>■

The overgrown lawn is filled with gravestones! You can head to the north around the outside of the mansion or go west back to the driveway.

You can also see: a marker pen.

Exits: N, W.

>get marker pen
You now have the marker pen.

>examine gravestones
Crudely fashioned from cardboard but adds some appropriate spookiness. Or rather inappropriate spookiness as they shouldn't be here.

>■

be found by heading over to the following web address at:
<http://8bitag.com>

tavern reviews

RODOLFO

AUTHOR: SAKIS KAFFESAKIS

RELEASED: 2023



ur CPC friend and Greek interactive fiction author Sakis Kaffesakis is back once again with his new

graphic adventure *Rodolfo*. Set in 1980, renowned Uruguayan archaeologist Rodolfo Skylarriente is on a mission to recover the lost ring of the great Hittite king, Suppiluliuma I. Unfortunately for poor old *Rodolfo*, a rival archaeologist had already found the ring, and

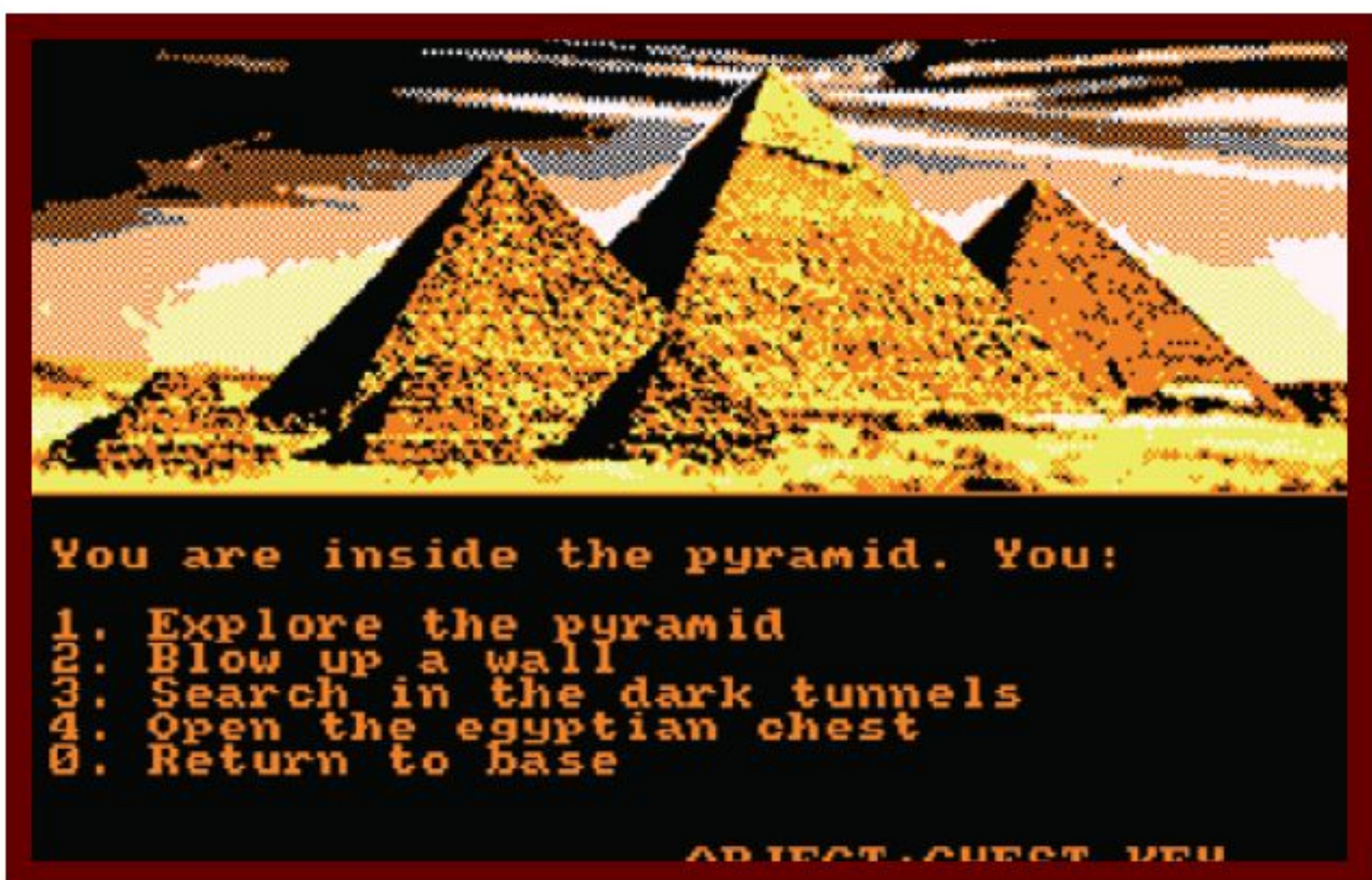


before passing away hid it in a secret location. Fortunately, however, he has left clues and markers around the world, which Rodolfo must find and follow in order to find the ring and return it to Hittite museum - 'It belongs in a museum!'

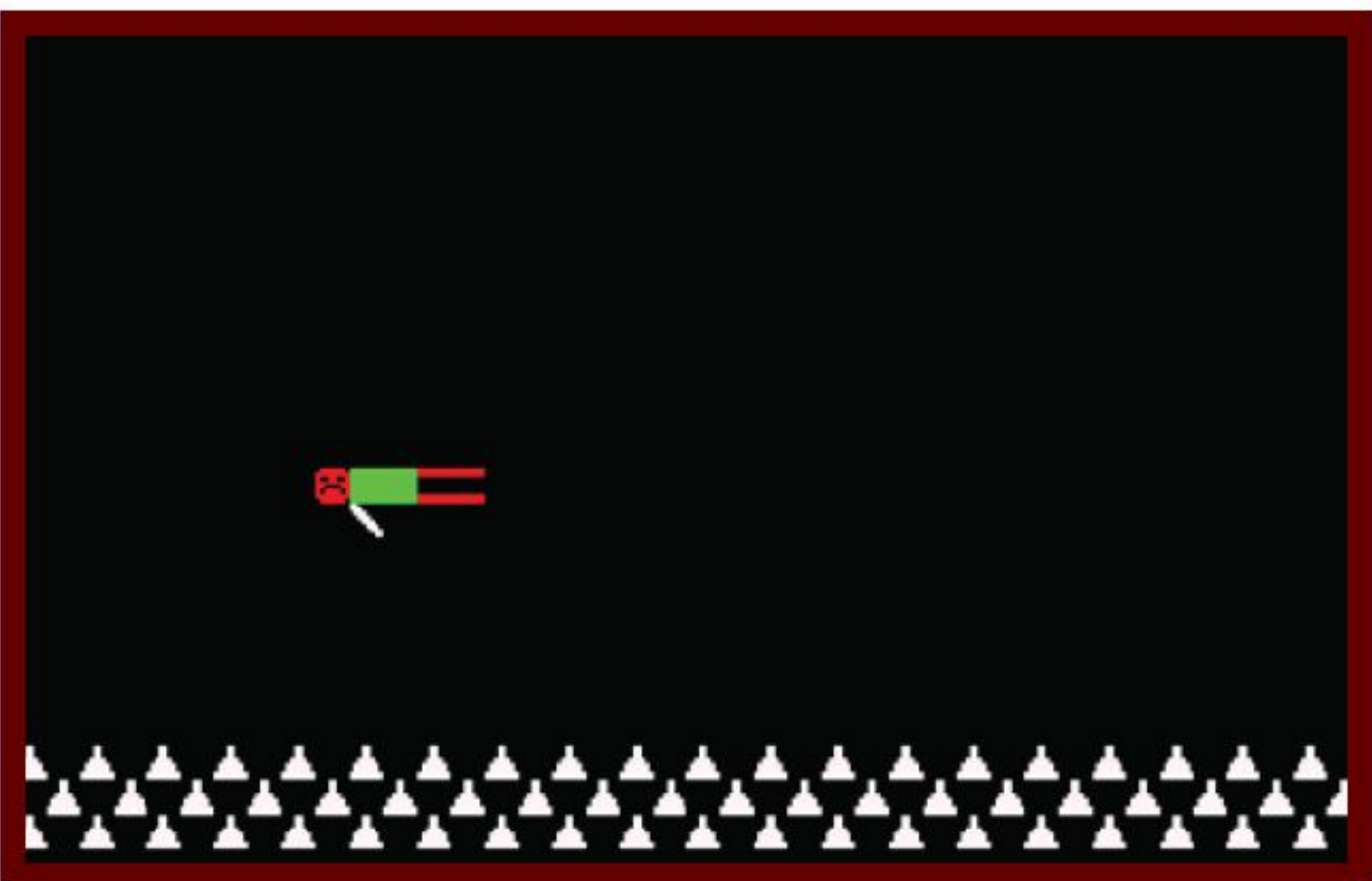
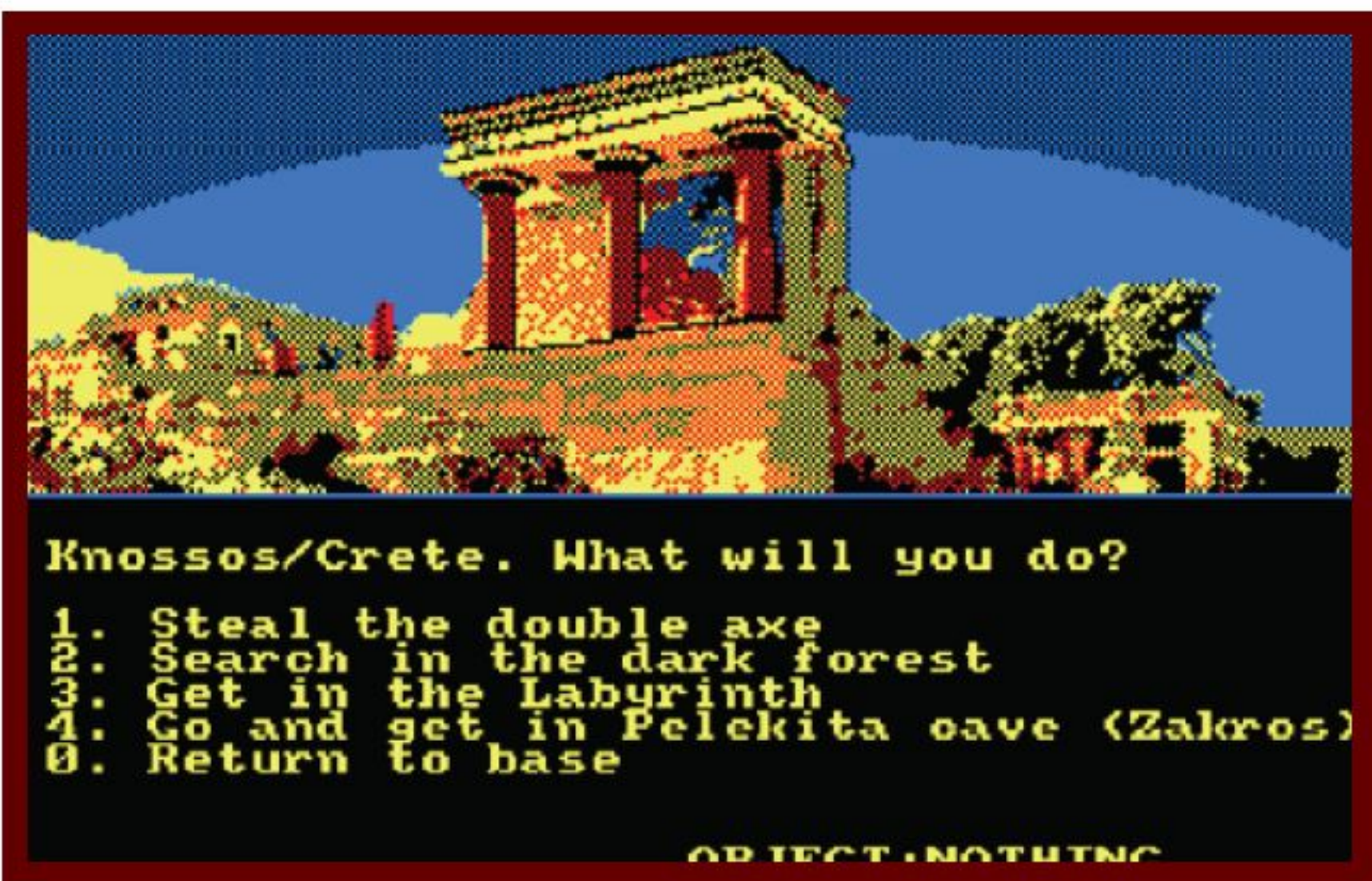
Starting off at Rodolfo's base, you are presented with several options, which you use the numeric keys to select. These options involve travelling to different parts of the globe or taking a trip to your storage house where several objects can be found. As with all Sakis's previous adventure titles, the game revolves around a case of trial and error. Many options presented to you will result in your certain death, while others, if done holding the correct object, will open further dialogue and options, allowing you to progress within the game.

Sakis has included more objects than ever, and many of these have uses. The puzzles are all fairly logical, and with clues given within the text, it won't take long for you to figure out which object is required for what.

Solving puzzles in each of the locations ultimately reveals a secret symbol which you have to take note of. Once you've collected enough symbols, you have to use a code key in order to convert the



Above: As with all Sakis's games the graphics are digitised images of actual real places. Here's the Plaza de Mayo which is a real place in Buenos Aires.



Above: Be careful where you tread! Some nice little animations follow some of the deaths.

symbols into numbers which will give you the passcode required to reach the end goal, King Suppiluliuma's lost ring.

Many of the locations that you travel to feature digitised landmarks which are the author's best yet, in my opinion. There are a couple of screens with basic graphics, such as Rodolfo's main

base, as well as a nice little animation of you falling onto spikes - just be careful where you walk, especially when it's dark.

Music-wise, Sakis's good friend Manossg is back and on hand to lend their composing talents to an atmospheric soundtrack that plays throughout the game and fits the feel perfectly. There are some sound effects, like the floor collapsing, for example, which are all simple yet effective.

Overall, I found *Rodolfo* a very enjoyable game, and I would go as far as saying Sakis's best adventure game yet. I don't mind the trial and error element, as it never takes too long to get back to where you were. I also love the Indiana Jones feel and vibe going on throughout the game, and I hope we get to see some future adventures starring prominent archaeologist Rodolfo Skylarriente!

atmosphere:	80%
interaction:	78%
Lasting interest:	79%
presentation:	81%

overall 81%

SPACE RESCUE IN JUPITER

Developer: **Altanerus Dog**
Released: **2023**

Our second game from Altanerus Dog this issue, he doesn't half knock them out these days, is a *Lunar Lander*-style game that takes us across the galaxy to the planet Jupiter. The year is 2070, and planet Earth's resources are in short supply. Thankfully, however, advances in technology have allowed us to venture out into the cosmos and mine for resources within the upper layers of Jupiter's atmosphere. The mining process is fraught with danger, and from time to



time, more often than not, the miners need rescuing, and that's where you come in. As the player, you get to control the rescue craft that is launched from the mothership in Jupiter's orbit. The descent won't be easy however, as you'll have to dodge the clouds of overheated plasma that lurk in the atmosphere.

Once safely down and landed on the mining installation, you'll have to take off and do it all again in order to reach the safety of the mothership.



Colin

Overall, *Jupiter Rescue* plays rather well, however, it's not without fault. There's an annoying flicker at the base of the mothership, and as your craft moves, it also flickers. The animations are fairly smooth, though, and there is a decent degree of challenge. That being said, you can just opt to land on the closest landing pad all the time and ignore the ones that are further out. This makes completing the levels rather easy. You do only have one life, though, so the slightest mistake and it's game over. Worth a play.



Gordon



The game plays with the vibe that you've satisfyingly entered a type-in listing into your CPC (without errors) and are playing the game with a self-satisfied smile. It's a simple arcade affair in the same vein as *Lunar Rescue*, but no where near as involved. The levels don't really change all that much - with just a change of colour and platform location differences, there's not a lot of staying power. It's superficial fun, and that's not a bad thing.

PRESENTATION 65%

Nice loading screen and decent intro. Basic menu screen.

GRAPHICS 67%

Decent enough, colourful. Annoying flicker needs to be addressed.

SOUND 49%

Good music track during gameplay. Lacks SFX. At least give us a thruster effect.

ADDICTIVENESS 61%

Straightforward easy gameplay. Fun for a short while, but the novelty soon wears off.

LASTABILITY 53%

Strangely, you feel compelled to play on, but with only five levels it won't take long to complete.

**OVERALL
67%**

CRITICISM

CRITICISM

MERRY
CHRISTMAS





AMTIX! CPC

FLASH BACK

For our second 'Flash Back' this issue, Sean McManus revisits a budget classic gem with Mastertronic's much-lauded *Finders Keepers*.



Can you help Magic Knight become a member of the Polygon Table? To do so, you must either escape from the castle or collect as much treasure as possible.

Finders Keepers is a splendid mash-up of several gameplay ideas. At first glance, it's a platform game, packed with enemies to avoid. But there are two top-down mazes to



explore as well, with objects strewn throughout. Also in the mix is a puzzle game, based on combining items to make new things, and trading objects with the trading posts.

This element uses menus, which were expanded upon to create the Wind-imation system

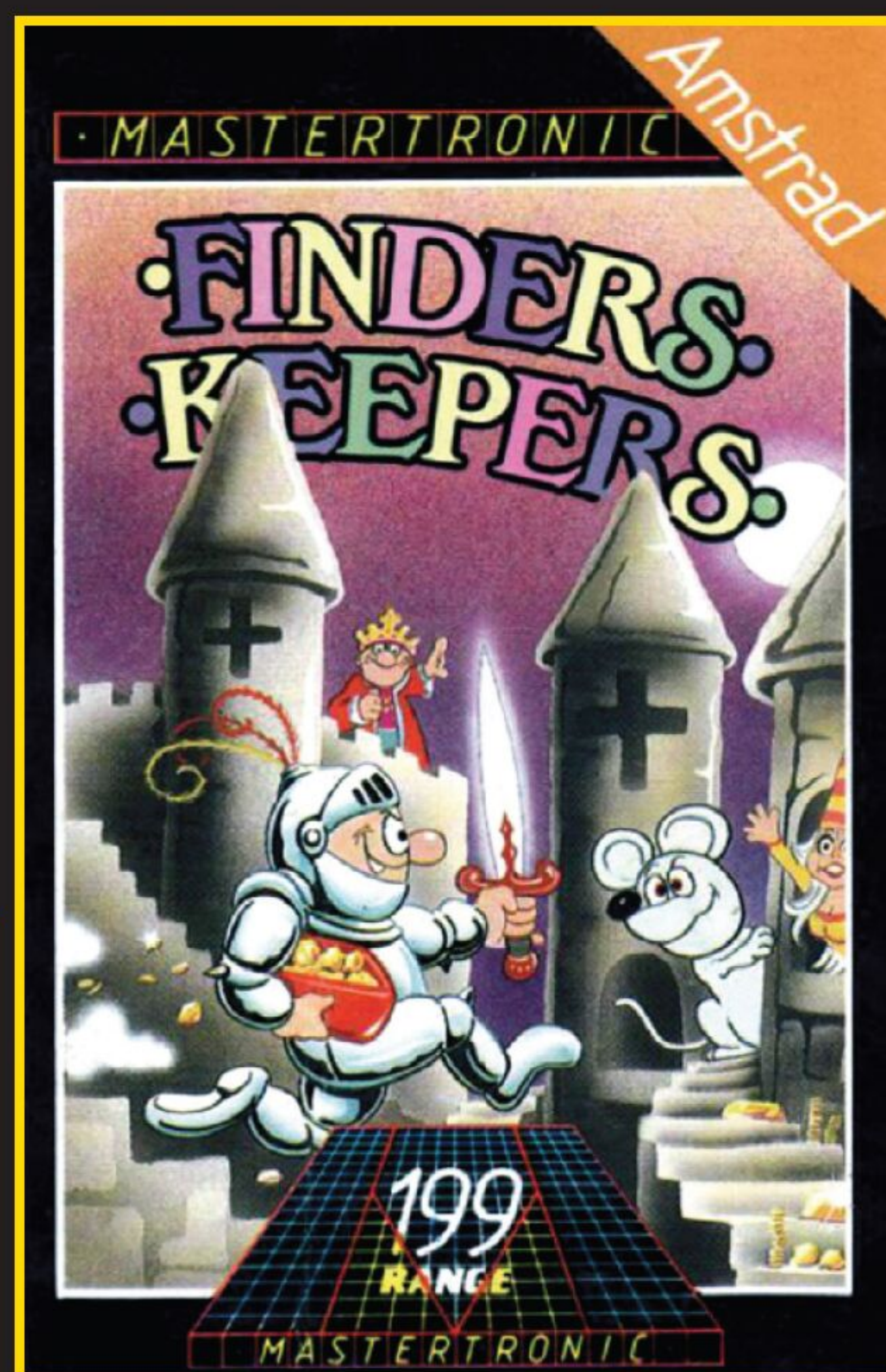


for Magic Knight's later graphic adventures (starting with *Spellbound*).

To enjoy *Finders Keepers*, you'll need to be comfortable with experimentation. You'll spend a lot of time combining objects to see whether they do anything interesting together. There's no obvious reason why the sage's stone and the lead bar should make a gold bar, but they do. Objects combine automatically if you're carrying both, but you aren't told when it happens, so you need to keep an eye on your inventory. There are lots of red herrings in the game (did you think that hairy dog would just frighten the cat away?).

A maximum of five items can be carried (of any size). You'll need to manage your inventory well and keep track of what you see where as you explore the castle. You can, at least, drop items anywhere to pick up again later.

Released by Mastertronic in 1985, *Finders Keepers* was one of the first games to show that budget titles could be high quality. Across all 8-bit formats, the game sold more than 330,000 cop-



ies. Although this game also appeared on the Spectrum, the graphics on the Amstrad were recreated in Mode 0, making them bold and colourful. There's a



jolly medieval-style tune to keep you going.

Sean



Finders Keepers certainly gave you value for your £1.99. The presentation is excellent, and the game feels large, although there are only about 20 rooms surrounding the mazes. There are some frustrations. Positioning Magic Knight to jump between platforms can be hard, and the nasties feel unavoidable.

Overall, the game works well, though. The multiple endings are a nice twist, and the platform rooms and mazes make a fun world to explore.

The object puzzles are a bit random and require a lot of trial and error. MK went on to more logical adventures in later games, but nothing with the pace and energy of *Finders Keepers*.

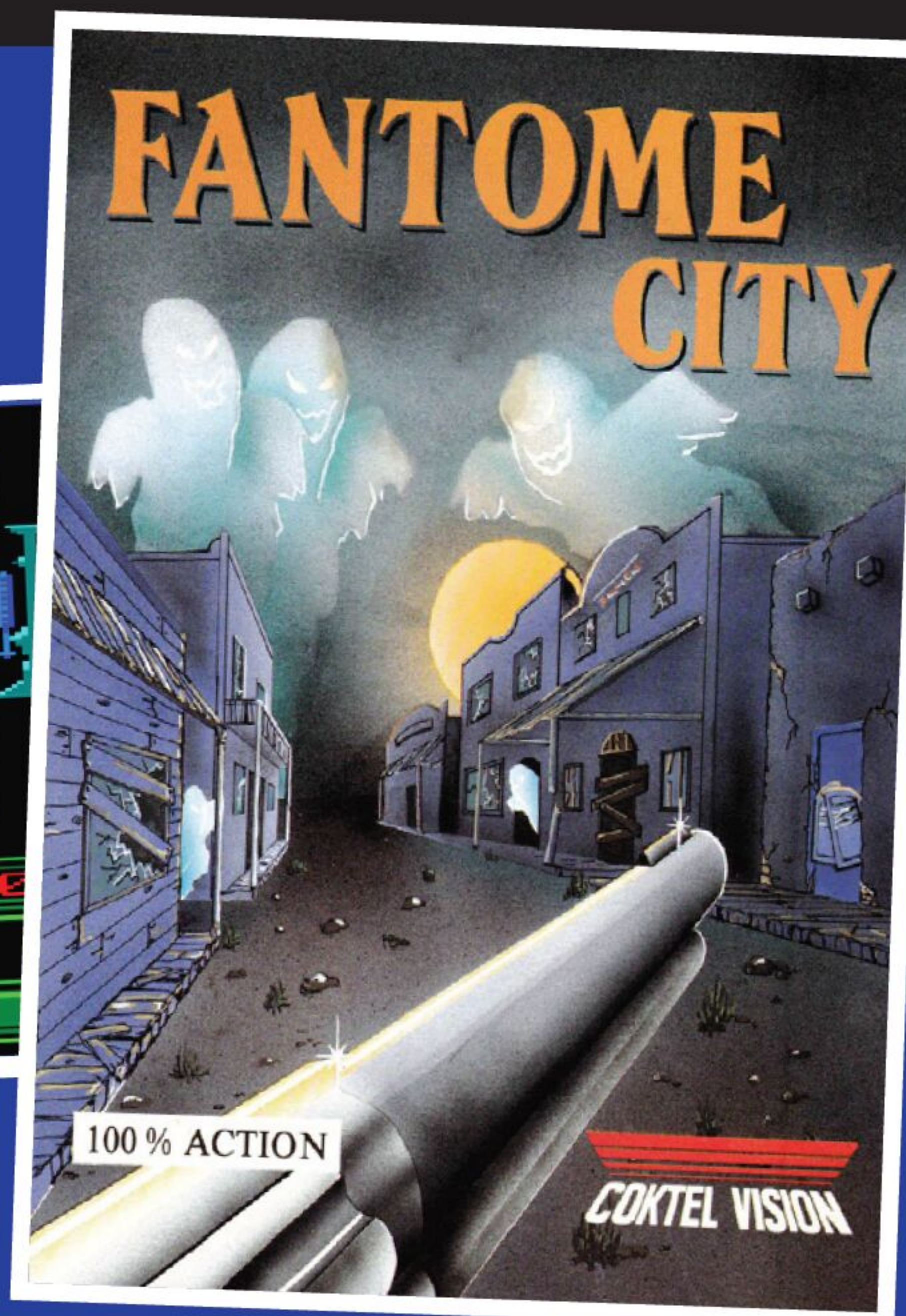
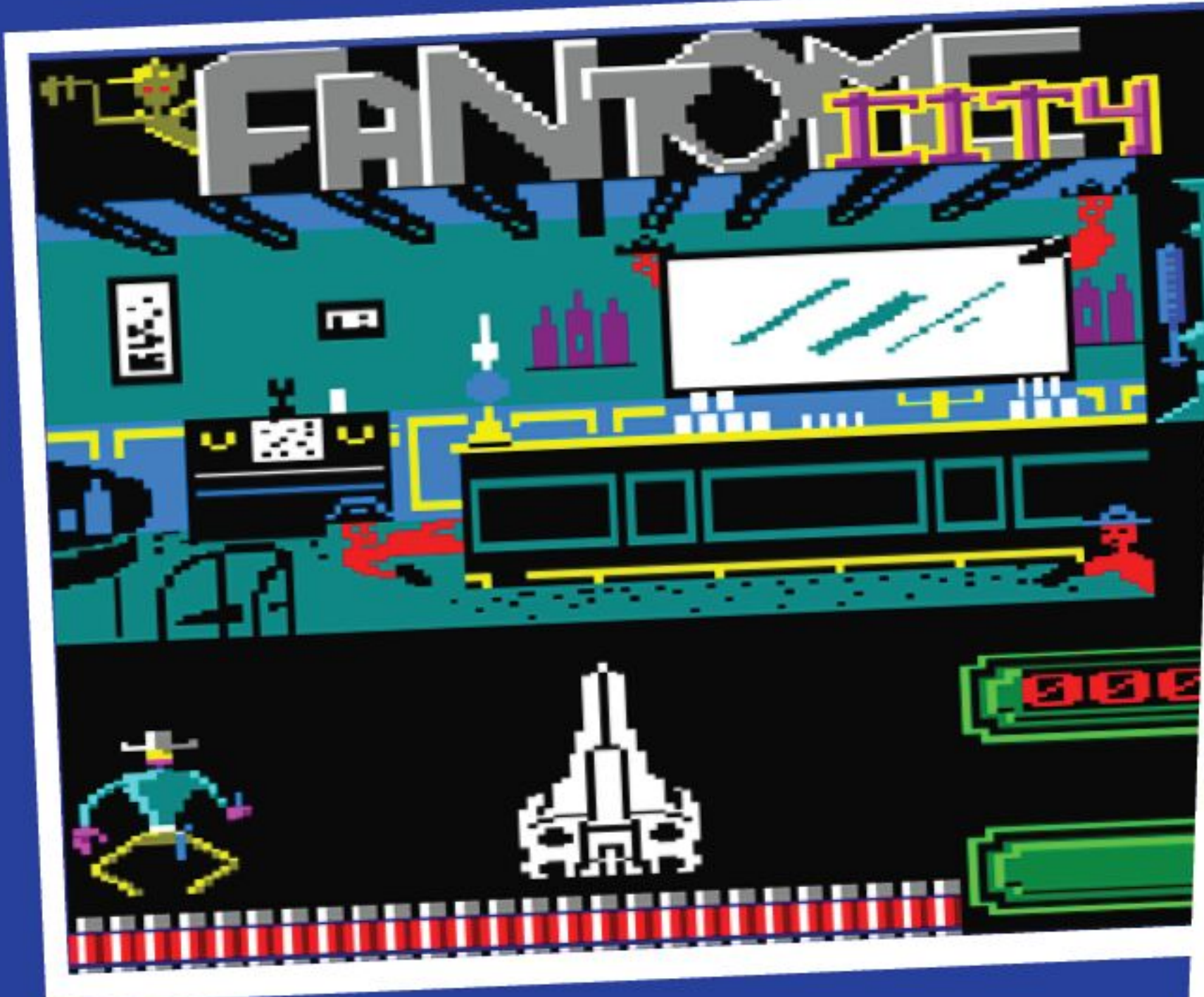
CRITICISM

In the latest of a regular series, Graeme Mason looks back at six more of his favourite Amstrad CPC game covers from a particular year. In this issue, he revisits the year 1986.



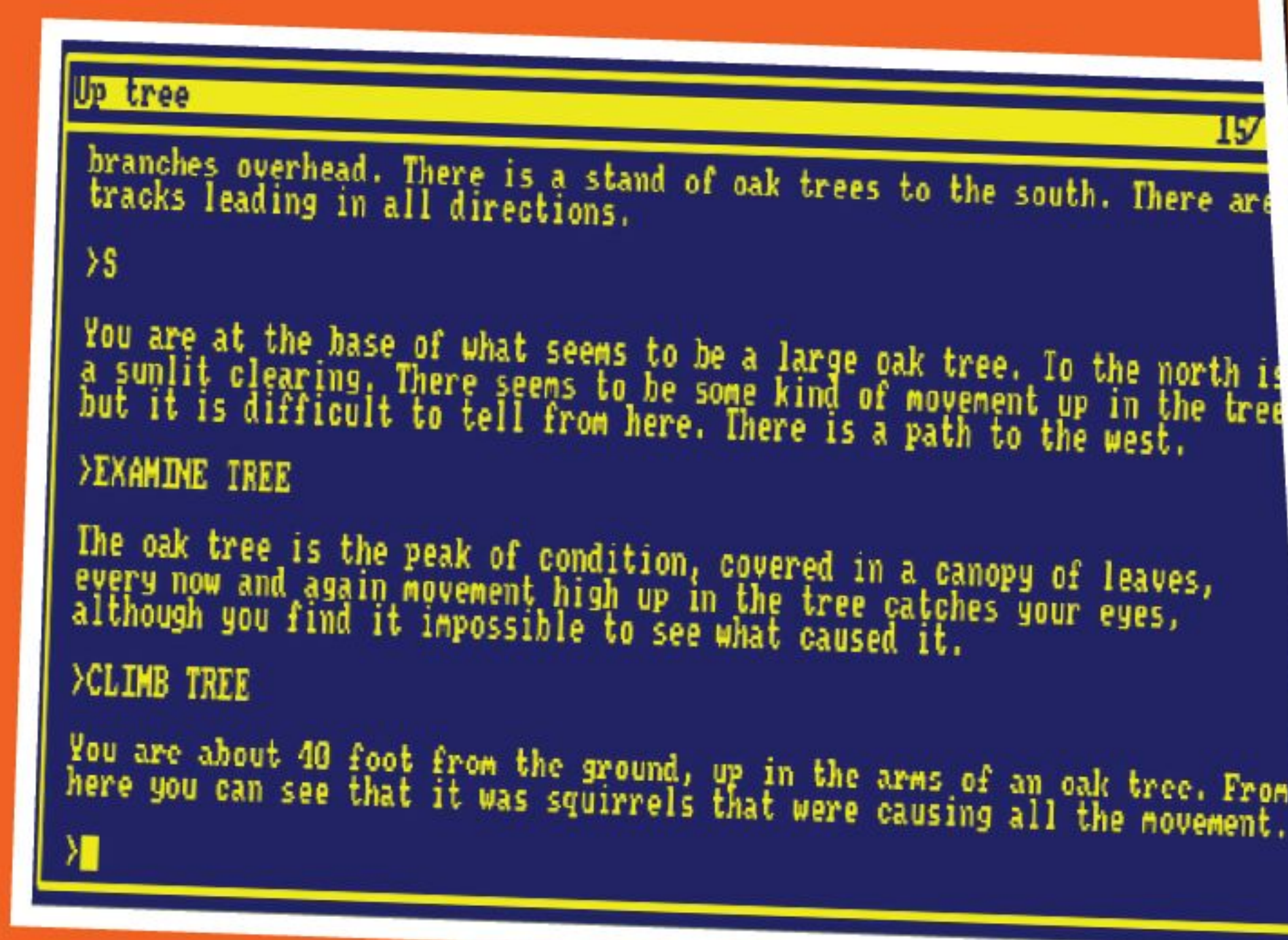
Game: Fantome City Publisher: Coktel Vision

What's that? "100% Action" boasts the cover of this Coktel Vision game, and it does nothing to disguise the fact that this is some form of gallery shooter. *Fantome City* is set in the Wild West, but before you roll your eyes, you're shooting ghosts, not cowboys and Indians. Of course, this is all made perfectly obvious from the cover, and what I adore about this image is the dilapidated scene in front of the player, boarded-up houses and a weed-riddled street. While the ghosts circling above the town take on a somewhat traditional form, their maniacal grins are particularly well rendered; however, we could have probably done without the cheeky fellow poking out of a house on the right – he looks like he's giving you a cheery wave rather than a fright! The long barrel of the player's gun, echoing the game's display, completes an evocative cover that nicely shows us what *Fantome City* is all about.



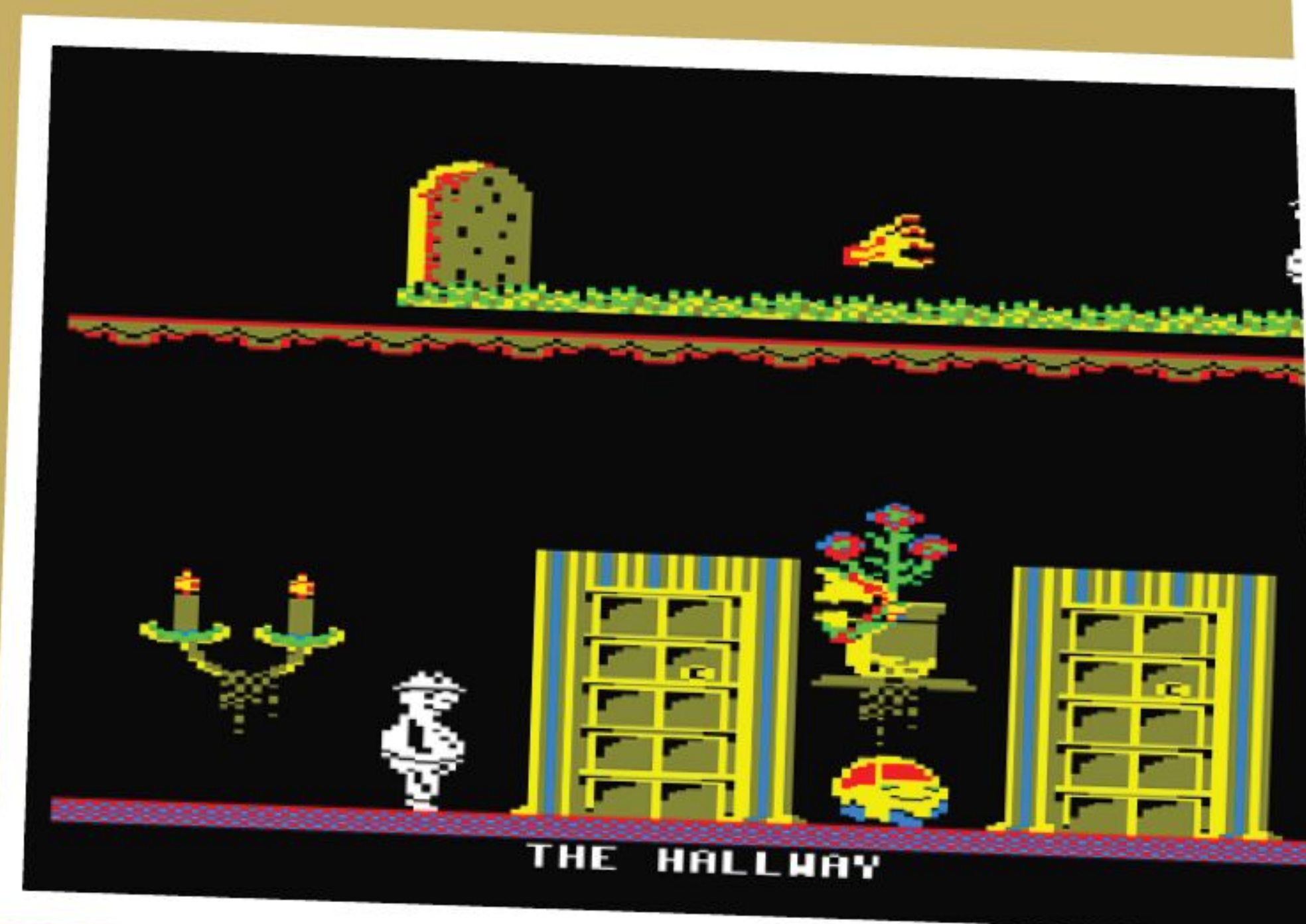
Game: Forestland Publisher: Classic Quests

Forestland is a fairly average text adventure from 1986 in which the player enters an eldritch world full of standard fantasy creatures. But its cover... wow. This cover is made up primarily of delicate brown and green hues, and there's a Hobbit-esque vibe to the tree dominating the picture. A door and windows have been expertly carved into the tree trunk while squirrels hunt for nuts around its base. This is an early location from the game, and it's all beautifully painted – but perhaps my favourite aspect is behind this central tree. Rays of sunshine dapple down into the mysterious forest, hiding all manner of danger for the player. Finally, the gorgeous wood-effect border that surrounds the picture impeccably enshrouds a marvellous game cover.



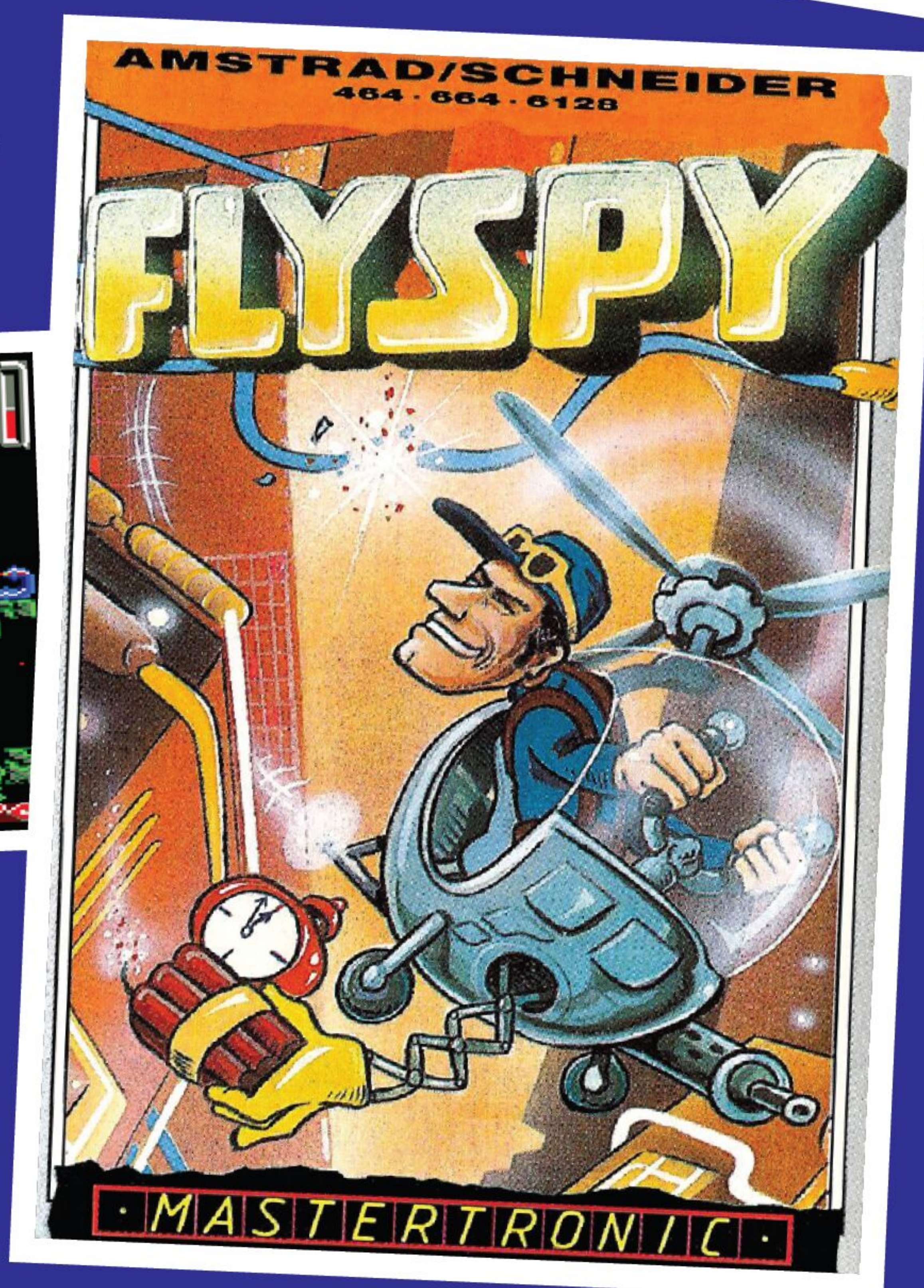
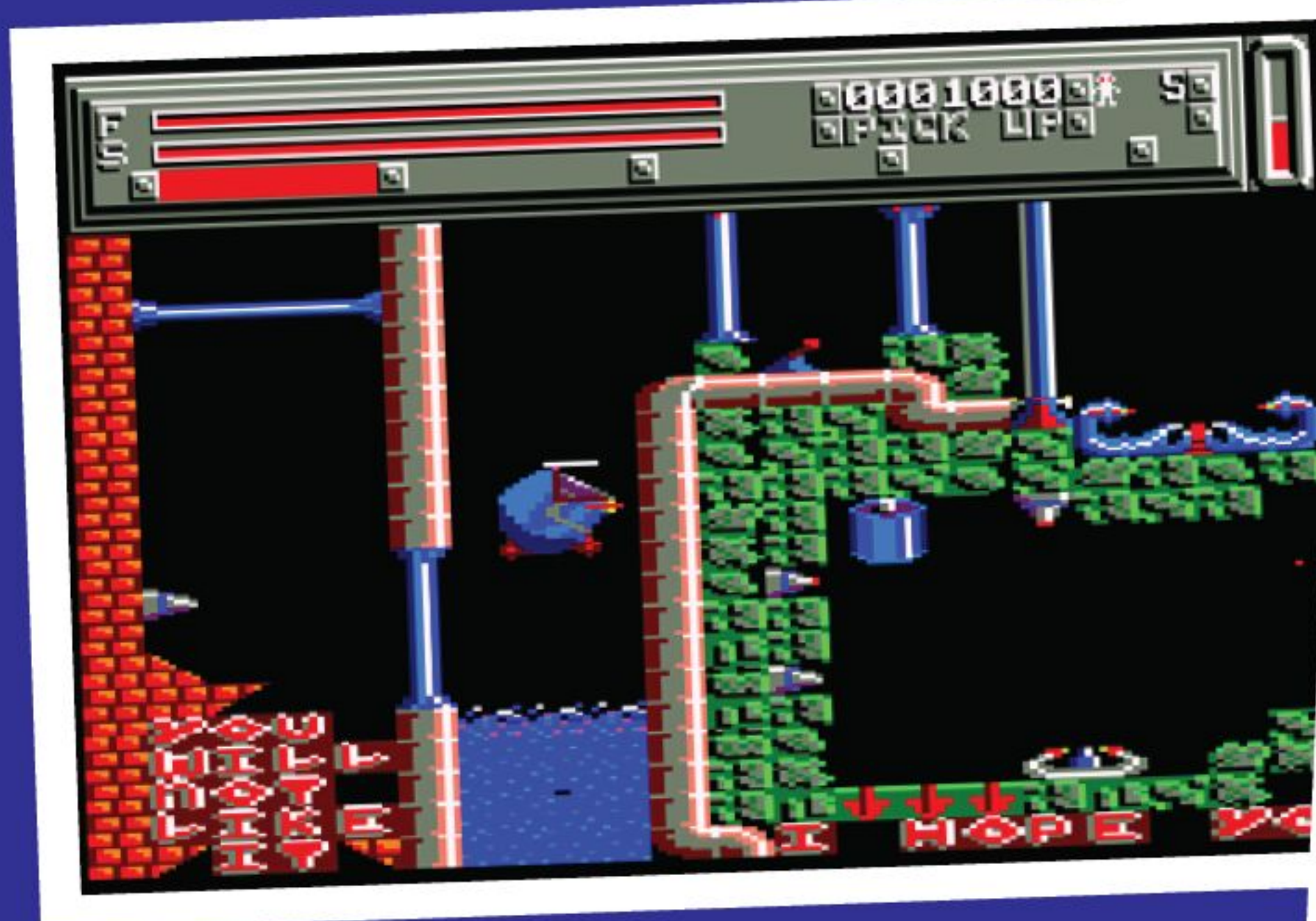
Game: Deathsville
Publisher: ACE Software

Deathsville's cover certainly lives up to its name, and the game is the type of arcade adventure that became very popular in the mid-eighties. The player is trapped within the eponymous town and solves puzzles while dodging enemies so they can escape this deadly urban nightmare. Full of creepy moments and challenging gameplay, it's not a well-known Amstrad game, but well worth checking out for fans of the *Wally Week* series (to which its player character bears an uncanny resemblance). Its cover offers a nicely ornate castle, its narrow spires evoking the approaching skeletal figure. This is a masterfully crafted monster, one eye holding an enraged crimson eye, the other a deep chasm of inky darkness. I'm not sure which is scarier! Even the inclusion of a comical bat can't take anything away from the pure hatred and evil emanating from this horrid skeleton.



Game: Flyspy
Publisher: Mastertronic

It got a bit serious with *Deathsville*, so let's look at a more upbeat cover – and no one did cheerful and upbeat better than John Smyth, a regular artist for Mastertronic during the Eighties. *Flyspy* is a fun little mini-helicopter maze game with teleporters [ah, that old genre – Ed] and represented excellent value for money back in the day at just £1.99. Bizarre and comical, the game was perfect for a 'John The Brush' rendition, and the artist created a consummate image to help sell another Mastertronic game. The central figure is a standard gurning Smyth creation, his head popping out of an impossibly small helicopter whose blades have just sliced through the cable above. There's not much else to this cover except for that splendid Inspector Gadget arm protruding from the helicopter's underside. Go go, gadget dynamite! Sometimes at odds with the game on the cassette, John's covers were always bright, breezy and massive fun.



Game: Heartland
Publisher: Odin

Odin was renowned for its 'less-is-more' style of covers, and this one is a favourite of mine. It helps that the game behind it is terrific, combining some sweet gameplay with lovely graphics and sound, and its cover has an excellent three-tier level of imagery. In the foreground, a sinewy hand clasps a wand as if casting some mystical spell; behind it sits a mountain, curiously floating in space, with ghostly clouds sweeping upwards from its base. Behind this again is a peculiar globe, which I suppose is the home of the mystical world of *Heartland*. It's an enigmatic image that intrigues the viewer with what this game is all about. I'm unsure of the relevance of the thin white rod between the mountain and planet – if it has any at all – but it's a good excuse to give *Heartland* another whirl of the top hat.



Game: Carson City
Publisher: Elice

I initially balked at including another Western-themed cover in this issue. However, this one is very different from *Fantome City*'s cover, not only in tone but also in artistic style. Set in the titular Nevada city, this Elice game has the player gambling, shootin', and tootin' throughout the west as they search for the bandits who have stolen their cattle. It's presumably one of these naughty rustlers on the cover, and I love the cowboy's craggy, downbeat, and trail-weary look. Somehow, the artist has imbued a sense of nonchalance and supreme cruelty into this character – he looks like he'd happily put a few holes in you before spitting on your body and heading to the saloon for two fingers of whisky. It's a diverse and gritty image that reminds me of those infamous Top Trumps horror cards from my youth – maybe the artist got their inspiration from that series of legendary monsters.



AMSTRAD Art

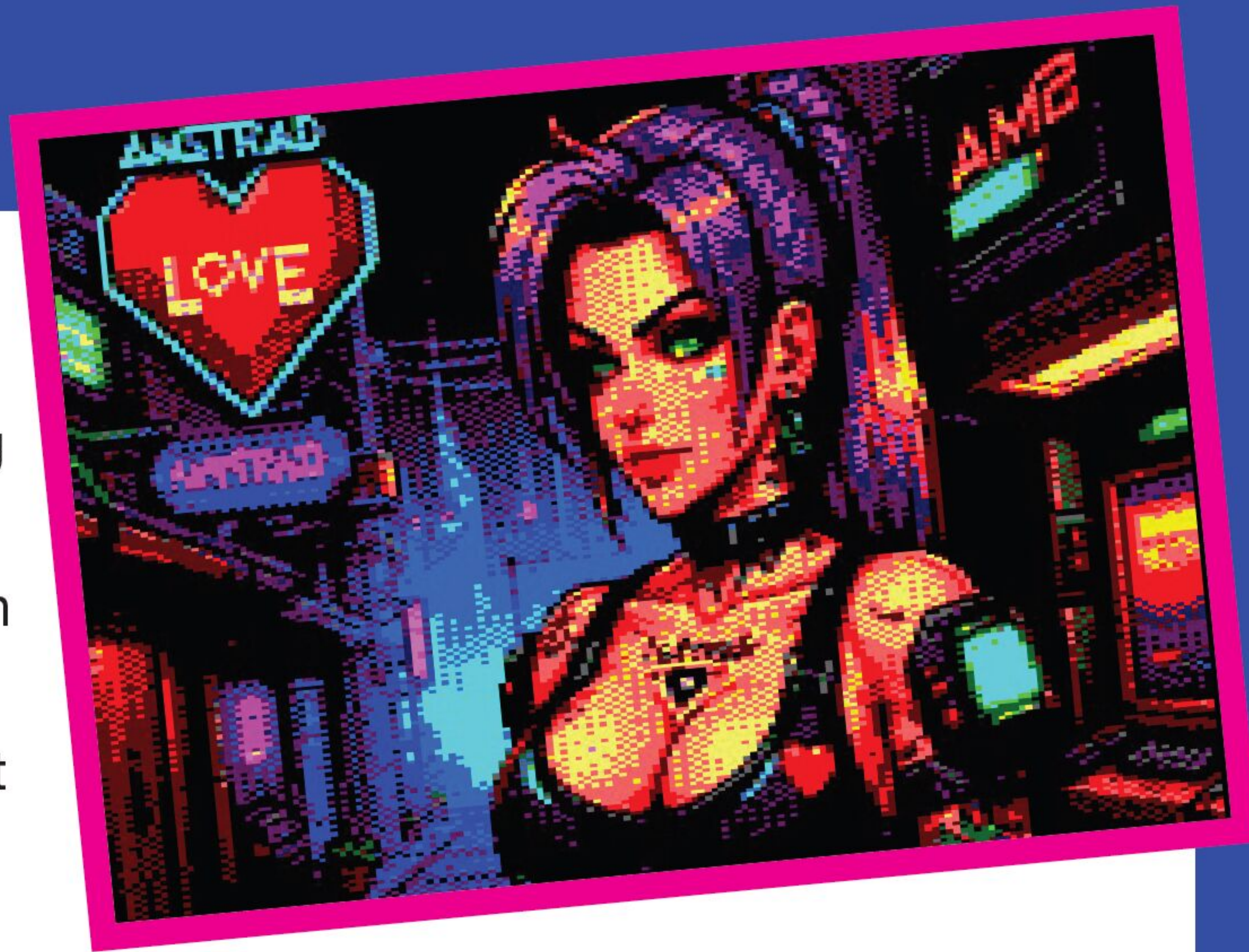
by
Zoe Kirk Robinson

It must be said that 2023 has been a brilliant year for art on the Amstrad scene. So many pixel pioneers partaking in painstakingly precise practices to produce pictures that pierce the perceived limits of what the CPC can provide. Could a more perfect parade of palettes be presented for

our pleasure, or would saying pretty please just be taking the [Stop that. Stop that right now! - Ed].

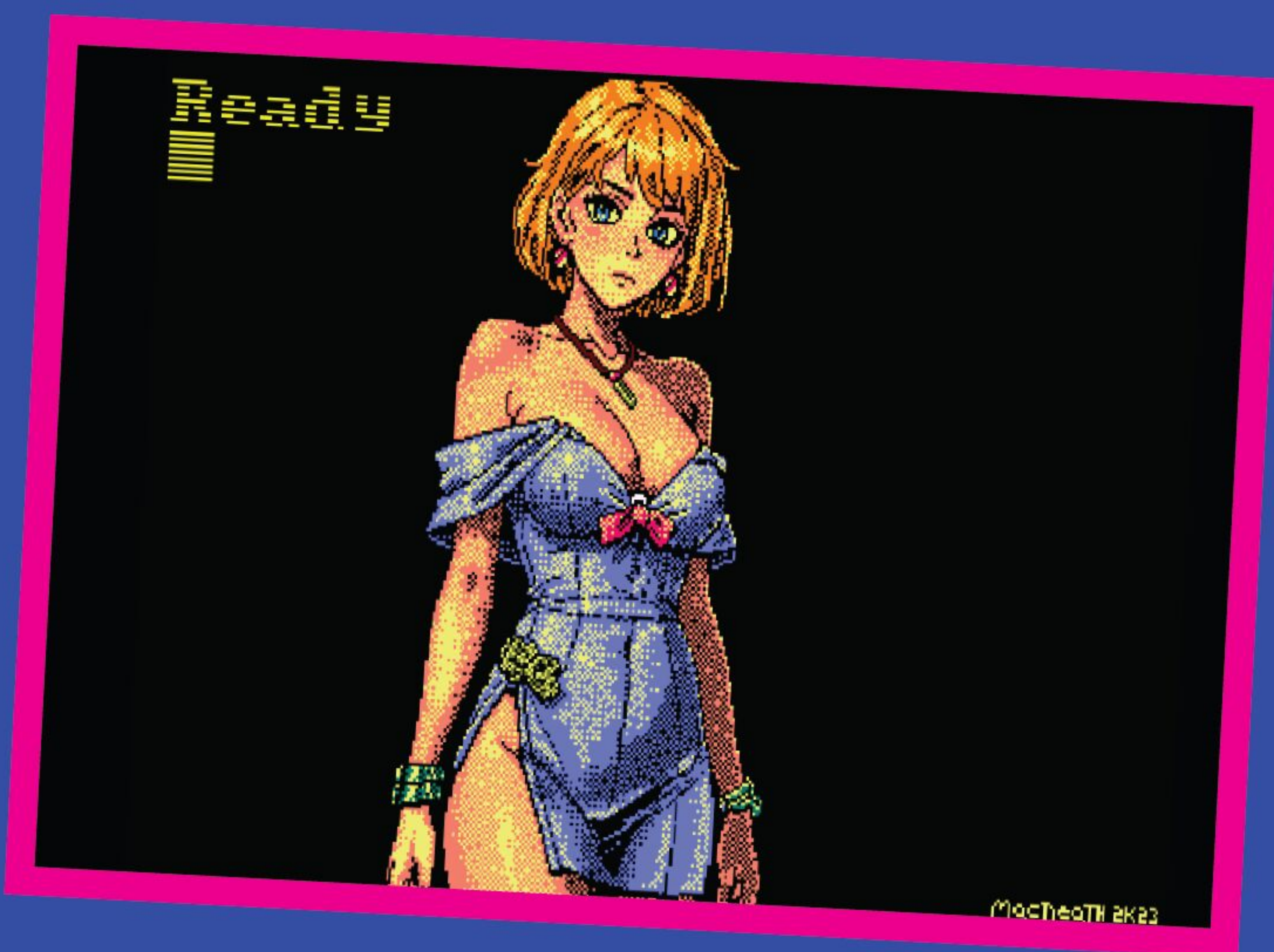
1 - Amstrad Love : Cyrille Gouret (2023)

When AI-generated art started appearing earlier this year, a few “Amstrad Girls” were generated on Facebook communities. Cyrille Gouret has gone one step further with Amstrad Love, by creating some fantastic CPC artwork that uses several of the “let’s stick electronics to anime ladies” feeling that came out of the AI art. Combining this with the dark and broody cyberpunk feeling of the 1980s gives us this fantastic image. The combination of warm and cold colours on both the lady and the scenery shouldn’t work because they should blend into one another but somehow Cyrille has made it all look fantastic.



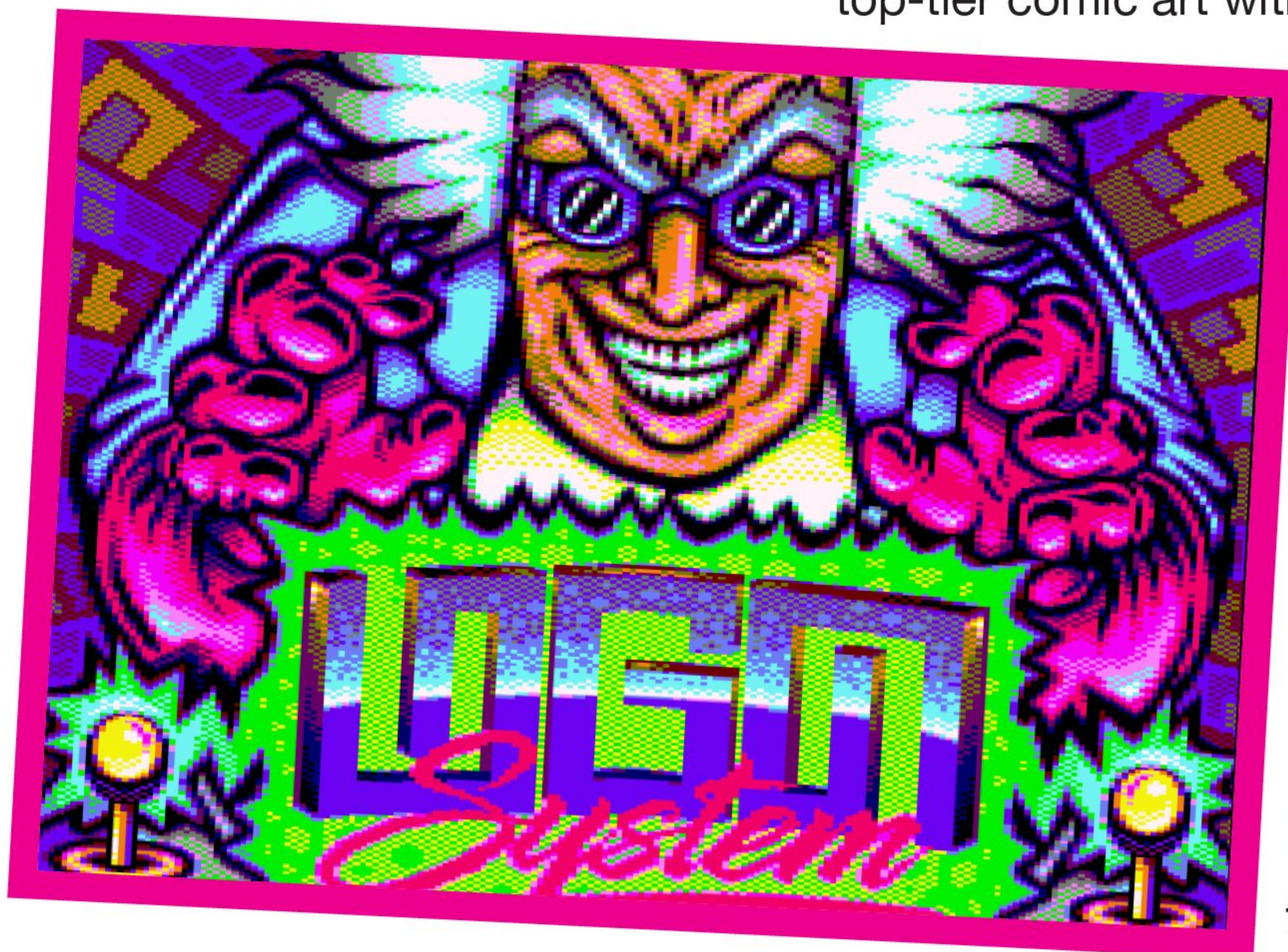
2 - “Ready”, aka TSTSPLIT : MacDeath (2023)

The lack of background makes the lady in this image really pop. MacDeath’s image is generated using machine code to produce a raster effect that allows rapid colour changing. The screen is in Mode 1, but the number of colours far exceeds that mode’s limitations. It’s an impressive feat; something usually seen in demos rather than in a standard slide-show image program. In addition, the anime-esque artwork suits the CPC’s colour palette very nicely, and the dithering effect mutes the bold colours where needed to allow the jewellery to stand out against the skin tones and clothing. Very impressive.



3 - DSC4 : Logon System (2023)

The legendary Logon System are back, and they've brought some top-tier comic art with them. This image



is a superb ending to their new DSC4 demo, with excellent colour choices to bring incredible depth to the piece. The bold purple of the scientist's gloves pulls focus, effectively bringing the hands further into the foreground, while the more muted cyan gives a sense of reflected colour to his white coat and pushes him into the background. Contrast this with the yellows and greens on his shirt, the radioactive "Logon"

reflecting the bold greens and yellows on logo, and the whole composition is pulled together nicely. This is simply fantastic use of colour to "glue" a composition together. Fantastic.

4 - Scroll Factory : Barjack (2018)

Created for Reset 2018, Scroll Factory is a demo with fantastic art by Barjack, as shown here.

This image uses overscan to provide extra space on the screen to fit a high-resolution, high-colour comic art piece with excellent use of colour. The bold blues on the left balance out the heavy use of warm tones on the right perfectly, while the purples in the center ensure a smooth transition from cold to warm, balancing out the overall composition expertly. In addition, there's a lot of line art detail on the left that draws the eye, while the detail is mostly provided by the curved colour lines on the right, creating a rather interesting contrast that gives the viewer plenty to think about.



OCTOPUS

2023



Author: **Team Galaxy**
Released: **2023**

Much was the envy of your average microcomputer owner towards the non-8-bit kids who decided to collect Game & Watch instead of playing in front of a CRT. Us CPC owners may have had one as

an Xmas gift, but we tended to opt towards a couple of cassette games instead due to the prohibitive cost of Nintendo's original portable gaming devices. Who'd have thought that all these years later, we'd see remakes of such games appearing on the gaming system we preferred to play upon?

Patience is a virtue of the cheap-ass-gamer. So, instead of having the limited black-and-white LCD aesthetic, the author has gone full CPC high fidelity on us and delivered an incredibly gorgeous adaption of the *Octopus* classic. The game is the same - there is very little

fluidity in the sprites, just like the original, with just several steps of animation. The premise is equally as simple - you have to submerge into the ocean with your little diver fella and avoid the tendrils of the leviathan to collect the sunken galley treasure, then return it to the surface. The

addition comes from achieving a high score. You only get three chances to do this, as that's all the divers you have in the dinghy above. Like the G&W original, the game features modes A and B - this only provides a little

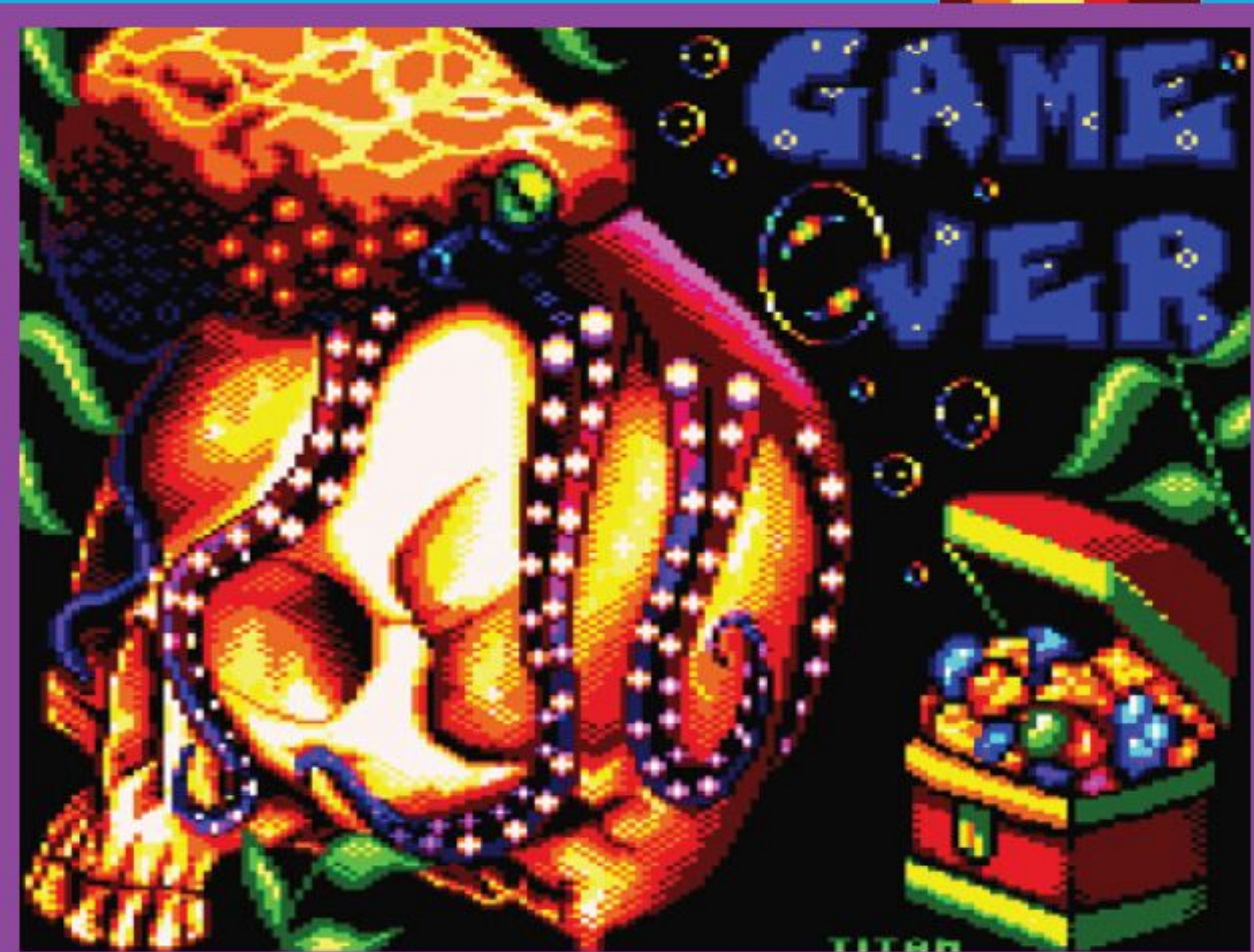


Gordon



Octopus Deluxe is stunningly gorgeous and has some of the best sprite work delivered on the CPC. I'm saying that this could easily be point 'n' click adventure artistry. The longevity comes with your own staying power in such a limited game. It gets boring very quickly - and this is the issue with any Game & Watch title. It's a fun challenge, but one which becomes engrained in the battle of the grind if you want to maximise your score. You easily settle into the rhythmic pace very quickly and forget you're even playing a game.

more difficulty, with the octopus moving its tentacles faster on mode B. It's as



Above: Artist Titan delivers yet another stunningly colourful array of additional screens.

simple as that - and that was the nature of pocket devices back in the day, but we coveted them anyway, as the thought of playing a game while travelling in the car was the thing of dreams.

CRITICISM

1666
CARIBBEAN SEA.



A GALLEON AND ITS TREASURES ARE SENT TO THE DEPTHS BY A GIANT OCTOPUS...

Colin



Wow, what a difference a couple of months makes. Gone are the monochromatic LCD graphics replaced by a smorgasbord of colour courtesy of CPC artist and maestro Titan. The gameplay is essentially the same as Octopus, and that's where the problem lies as I found myself getting bored very quickly, despite the eye-watering visuals. Who knows where Octopus might go next? I'm excited to find out.

CRITICISM



PRESENTATION 80%

Complete with a superb graphical backstory.

GRAPHICS 86%

Absolutely awe-inspiring graphics but with limited animation frames.

SOUND 76%

Lovely, Shows off some really good tunes.

ADDICTIVENESS 59%

One for the most ardent of score junkies.

LASTABILITY 50%

Beyond its visual splendor, it's still a limited Game & Watch title.

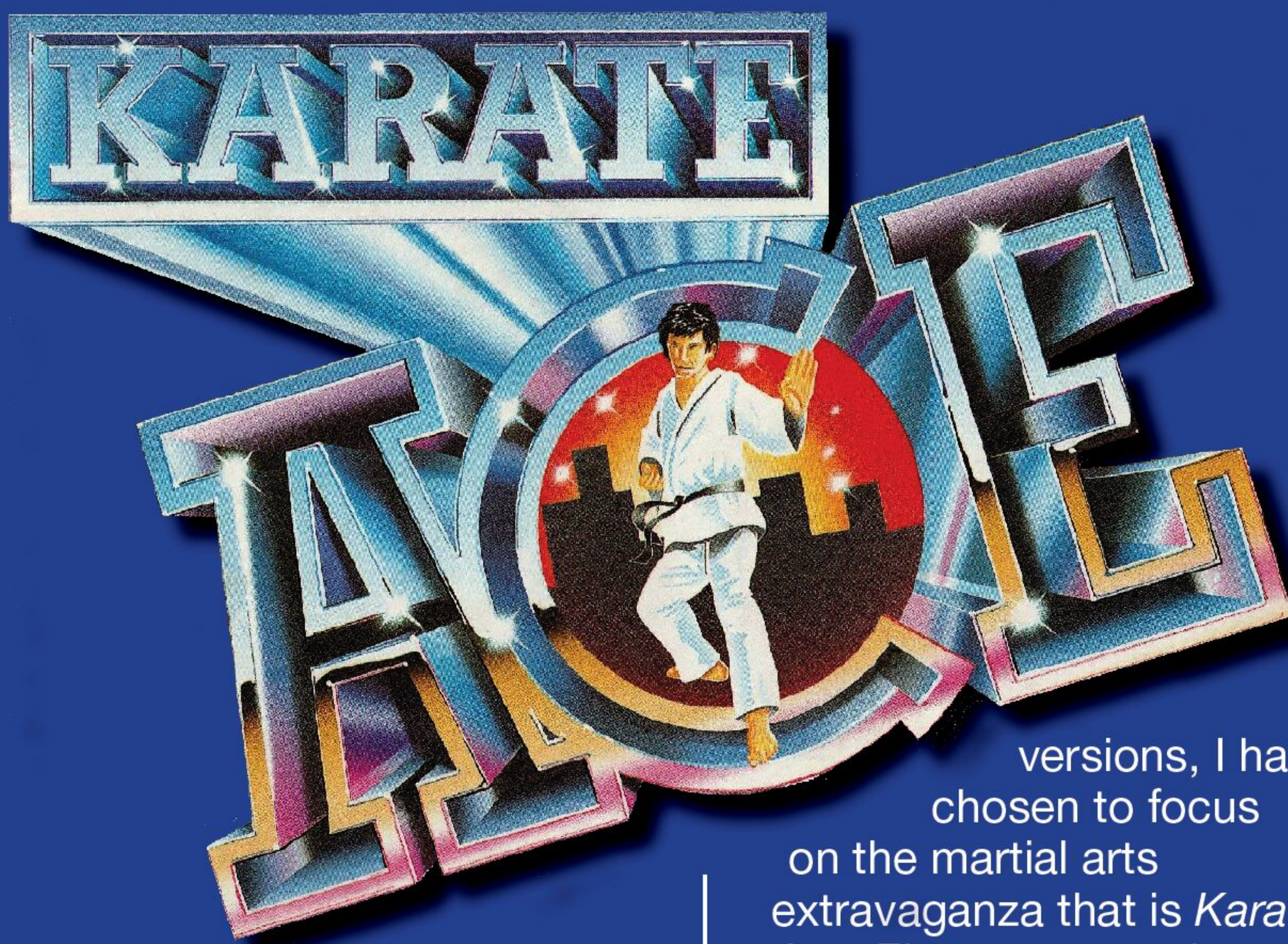
OVERALL 69%

COMPILATION

CORNER



Welcome to 'Compilation Corner', where we celebrate the fantastic big box compilations of yesteryear. In this issue, Chris Weatherley takes a look at *Star Games Karate Ace*, a compilation featuring hard-hitting, fly kicking, all-out martial arts action. Oh, and Ninjas!



HI-YA!

A compilation largely forgotten about, the Ace series by Gremlin Graphics brought together some choice games indeed. Each title has seven games to choose from, and for the



most part, they were good titles with a common theme. While we had the space and flight-themed

versions, I have chosen to focus on the martial arts extravaganza that is *Karate Ace*. Flex your muscles and sharpen your shurikens, let's get to business with some high-flying fighting classics.

WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

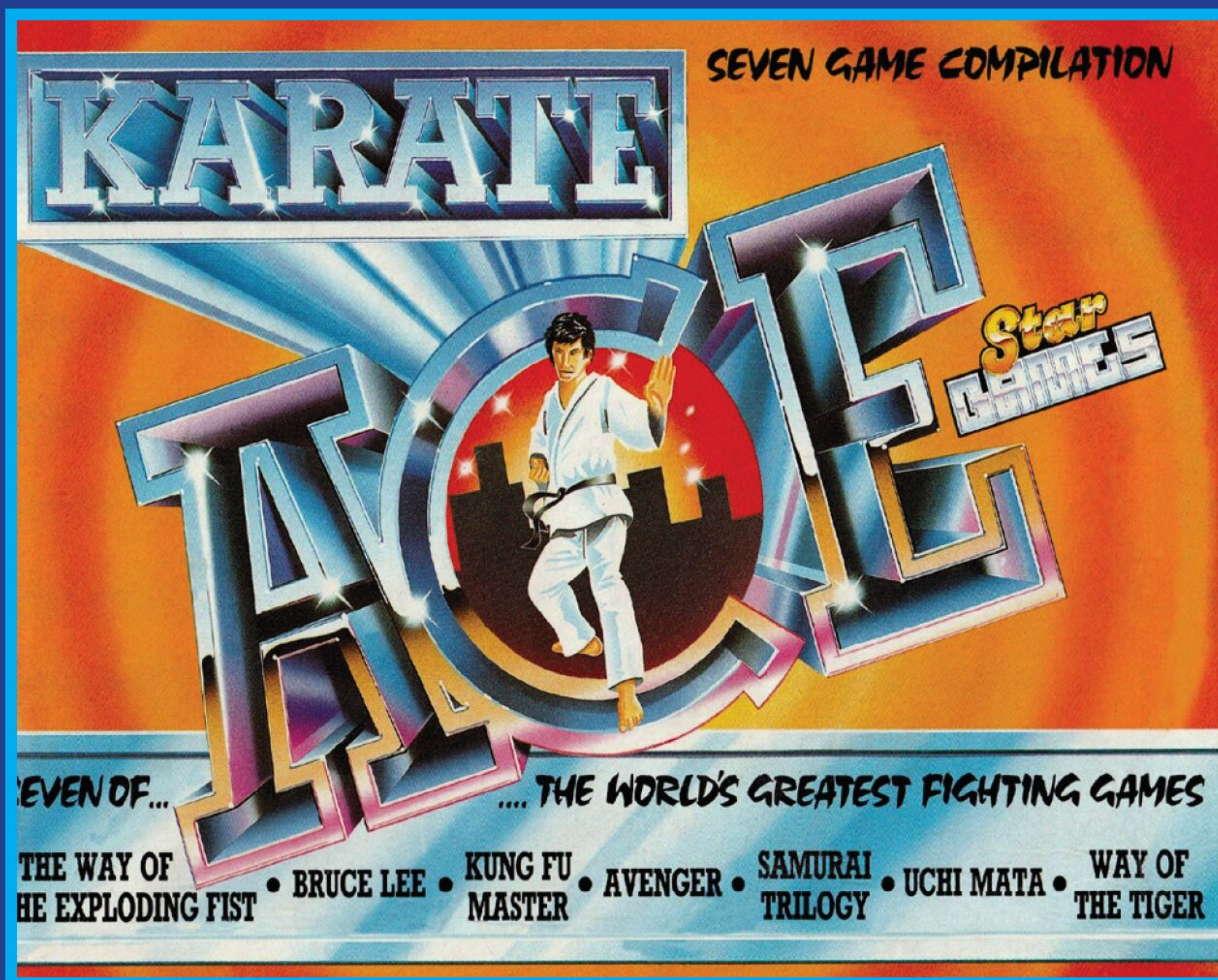
A classic original, which some consider to be the genuine father of the modern 'Versus' fighting game, *Exploding Fist* takes you to a tournament of martial arts to defeat all put in front of you and climb the ranks to 10th Dan. Master the



many moves, 16 in total, and learn how to strike that knockout blow. Brightly coloured, with nicely sized



and animated sprites, and that all-important 2-player

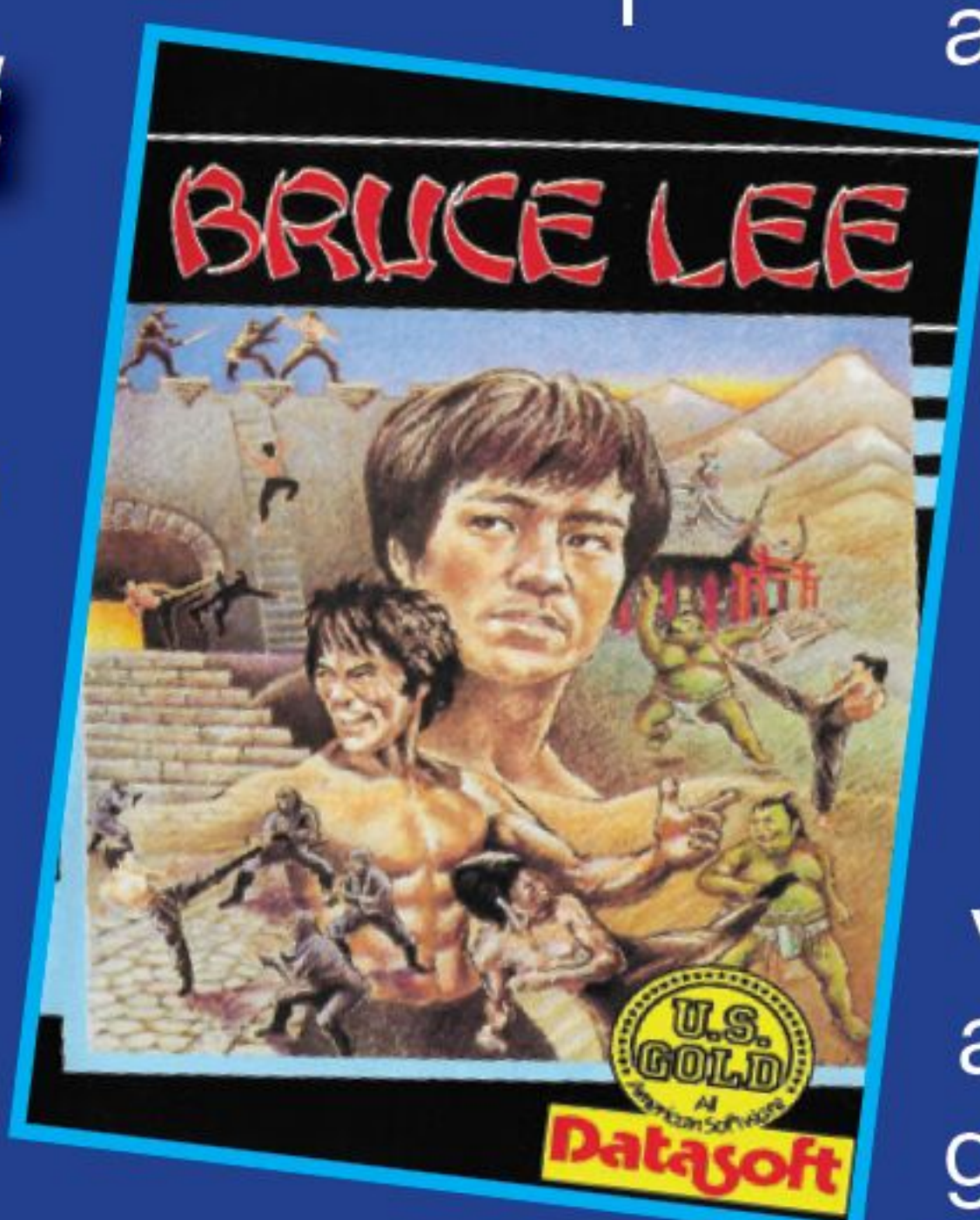


Above: The cover art for Karate Ace. A fine compilation of fighting games and good value for money with no fewer than seven titles included!

mode, this is often matched up against *International Karate* or its sequel *IK+*. I believe this is the strongest, getting the balance between speed, precision, and presentation just right. It does suffer, however, from a little bit of nostalgia fatigue, but it's a cult classic all the same.

BRUCE LEE

Quite an infamous title in its own right, *Bruce Lee* puts the legendary actor and inventor of Jeet Kune Do in the world of magicians and golden lanterns. While old Brucey doesn't do a lot in the way of fighting, he does plenty of leaping around platforms and bounding over traps. Pursued by two enemies who have the ability to endlessly respawn, you have to collect all the lanterns in an area to gain



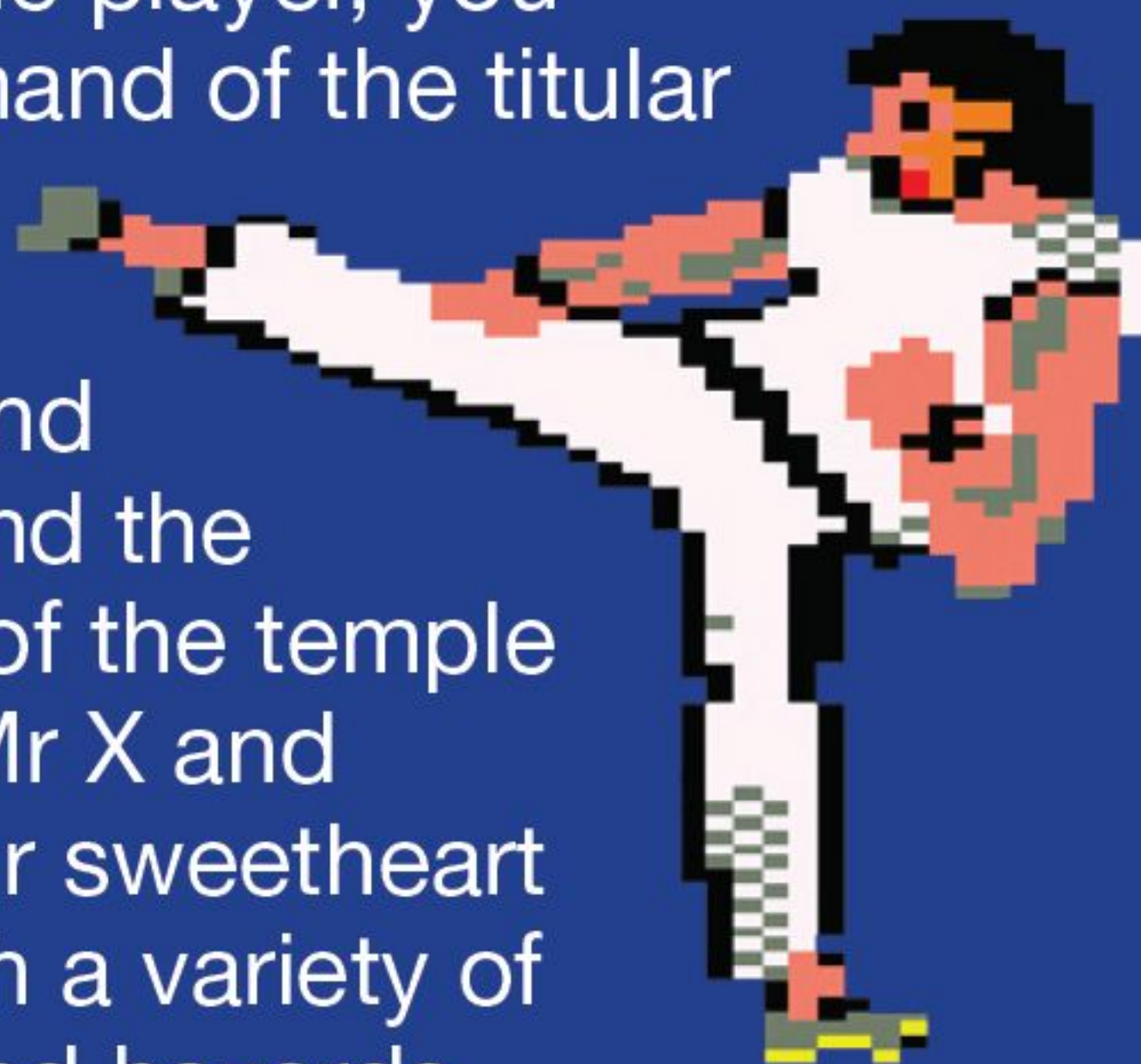
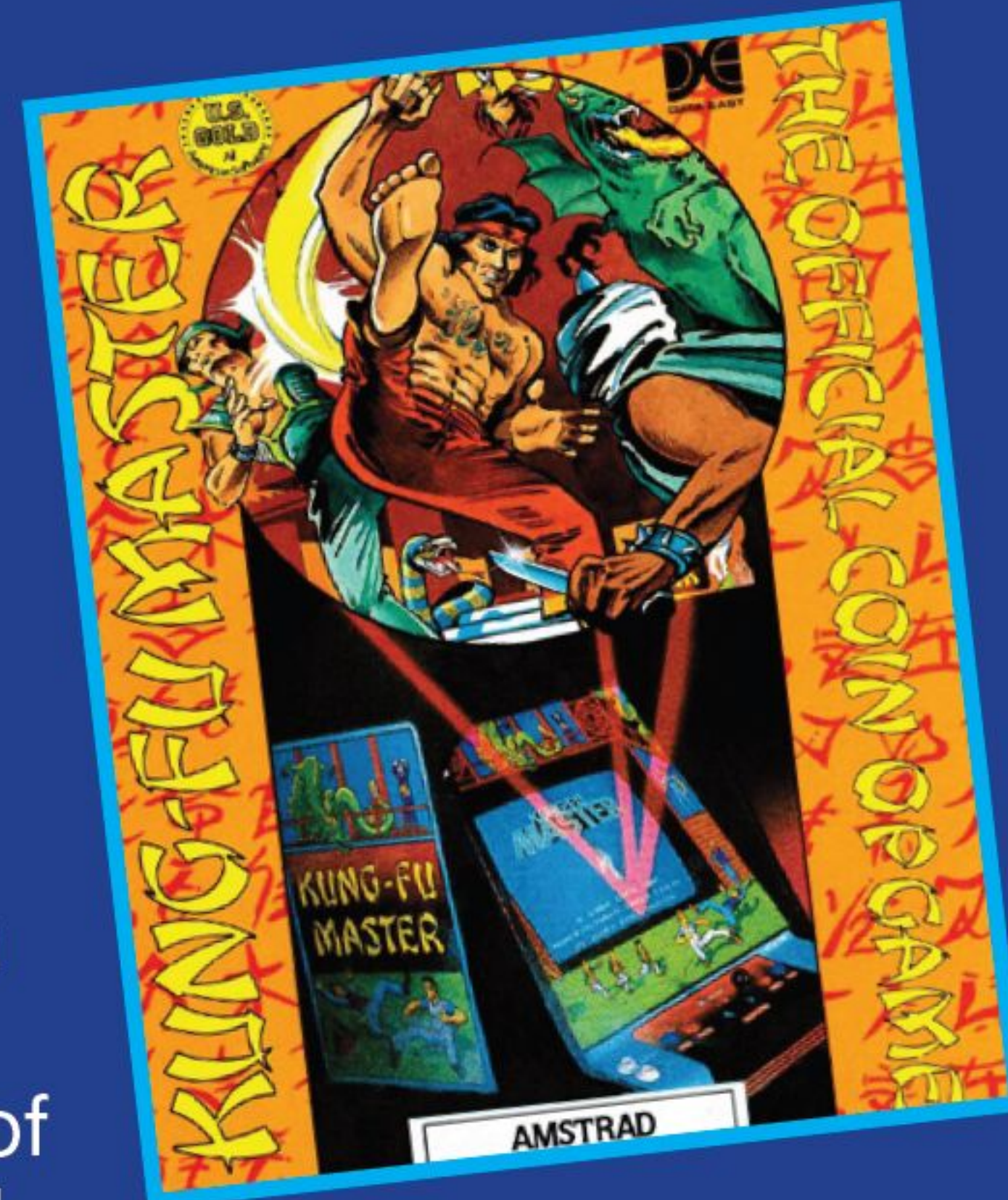
access to the next, and so on. Cleverly designed levels and a sharp control mechanic make this an addictive game despite its rather simple sfx and acceptable visuals. It's a perfect game for speed

run challenges if you need one on the Amstrad.

KUNG FU MASTER

One of the first scrolling beat 'em ups in the arcades, Irem's *Kung-Fu Master* is still a popular game to this day with retroheads. Ported

to various systems, the CPC version is a relatively solid conversion with all the highlights of the original and a few little quirks to itself. As the player, you take command of the titular kung-fu master, Thomas, and must ascend the five levels of the temple to defeat Mr X and rescue your sweetheart Sylvia. With a variety of enemies and hazards,



Above: A fine array of colours thanks to the CPC colour palette.



and nice graphics and design, this is a fine game despite the lack of sound. Originally inspired by the movies *Spartan X* and *Game of Death*, and made more popular by the Miyamoto-developed NES port, it's probably the most famous game on the compilation.



Above: *Avenger* - Dungeon crawler meets martial arts ninja action!



AVENGER

A sequel to *Way of the Tiger* set in the same canon, we once again control the Avenger who sets out to avenge his father and recover stolen heirlooms. This is a top-down dungeon crawler, far removed from



the style and feel of its predecessor with its lavish colour, small sprites and fast gameplay. Throwing stars and kicks are your weapons, as is ninja stealth to navigate the rooms and passages and find the items you seek. Assisted by great music and numerous effects, it's a tricky but very enjoyable game, capitalising on the CPC's strengths. A really great game.

SAMURAI TRILOGY

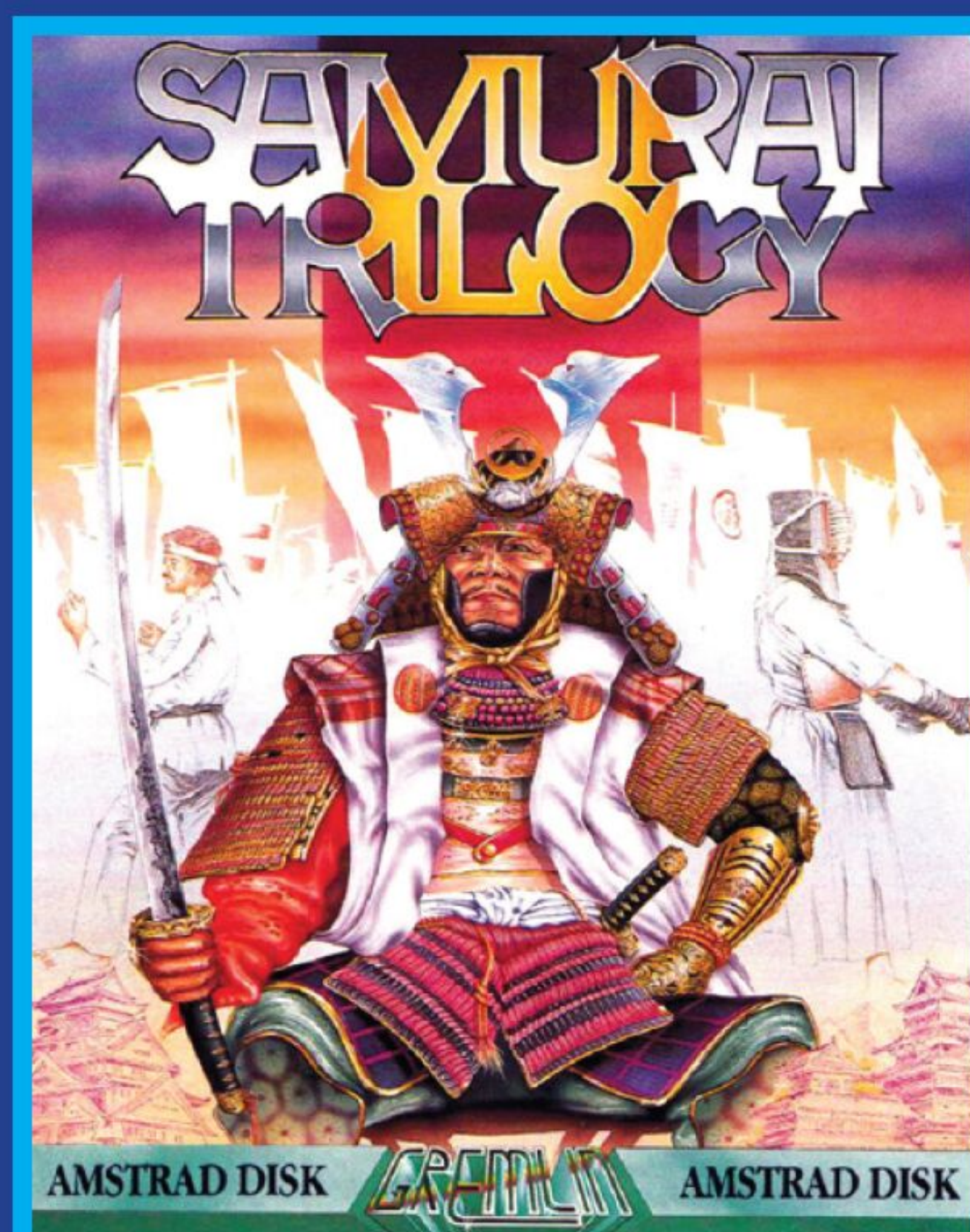


Bringing a sword to a fistfight is always guaranteed to stir the pot. *Samurai Trilogy* is perhaps most different from the rest on offer here. A lot of

work has gone into its presentation as a training simulator, to beat the best in the world at both Karate and

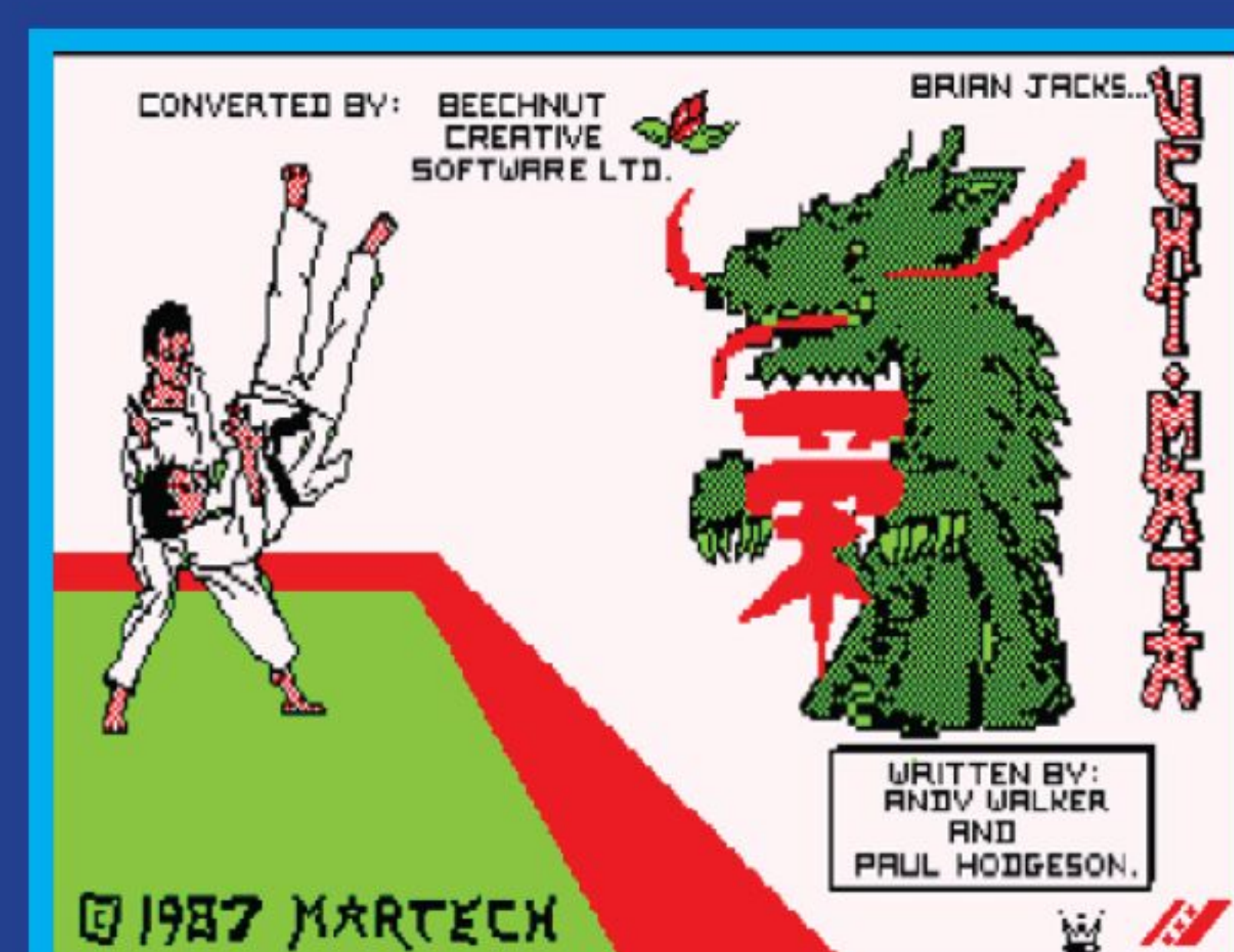


Kendo/Kenjitsu, all set against glorious

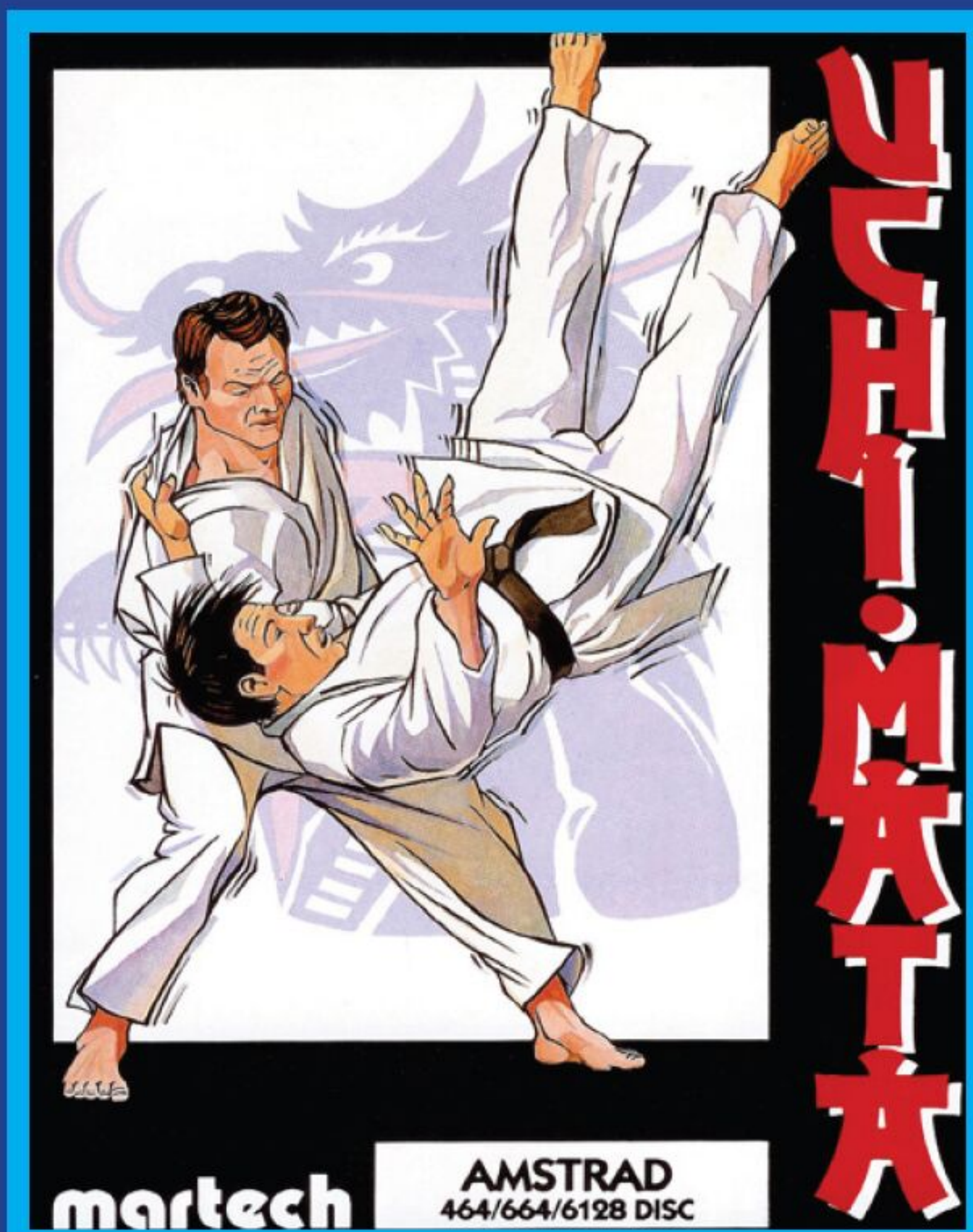


backdrops. While there is a certain charm to this title, mainly in part thanks to its music, lovely visuals, and concept, it falls flat when it comes to the actual fighting. Moves appear to lack the, erm, punch, and it all feels a bit dull and slow. With more effort put into the primary gameplay, this may have been the pick of the bunch, but alas, its many flaws make it forgettable very quickly.

UCHI-MATA



Another tournament-style fighter, this time based on the throwing martial art of Judo. Something different that sounds like a bit of fun, but unfortunately, for me personally, this is the weakest

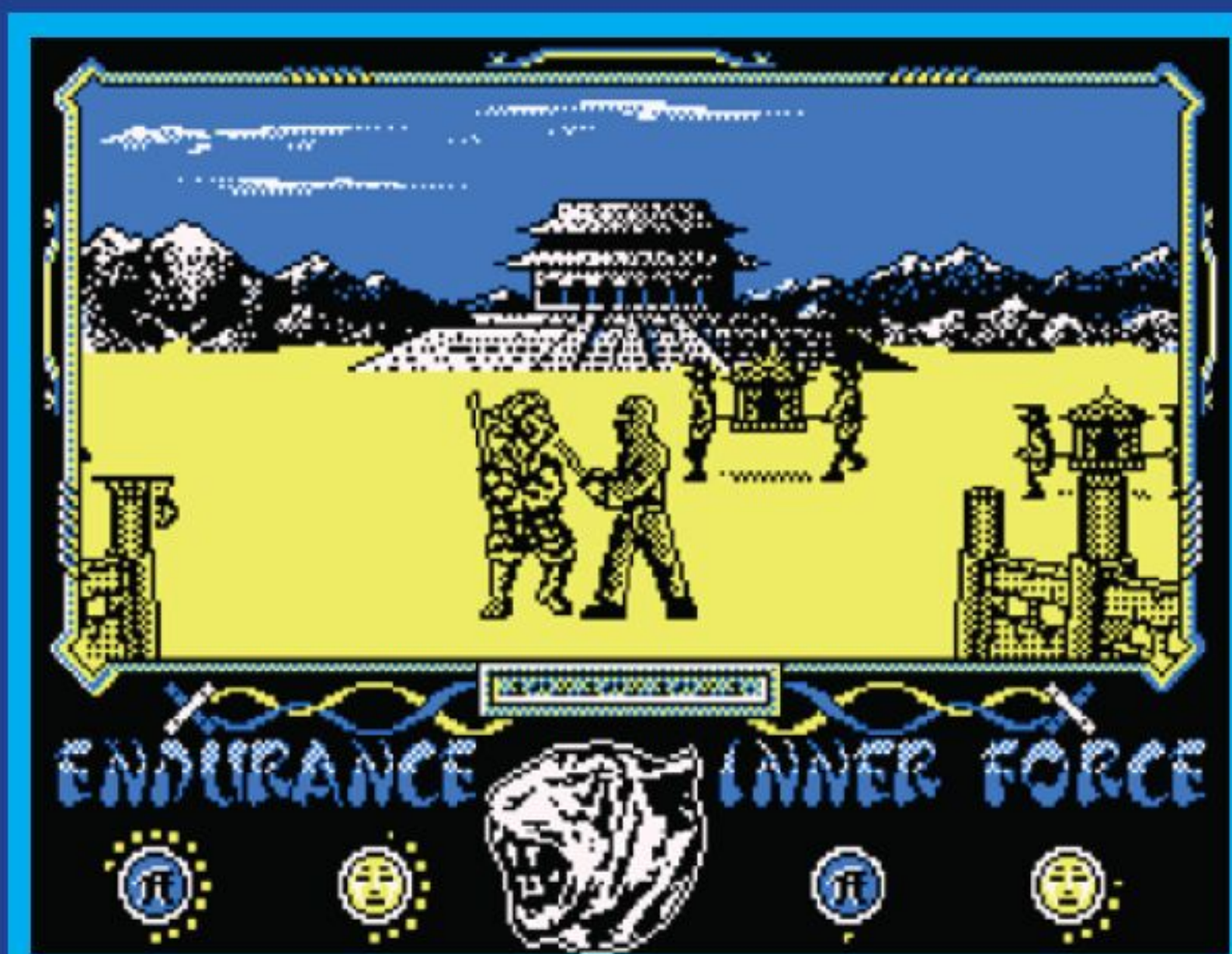


Above: Don't let the colourful graphics or pretty inlay artwork fool you. It's pants!

game on the package by a long chalk. The setup is a straightforward Judo tournament, with a two-player mode included should you wish to make your mates suffer as well. However, performing the moves is nigh on impossible at worst and totally random at best. The large sprites are nice, but the animation is lacking, and annoying flickering is frequent. The screenshots make this look pretty good, but compared to the others on *Karate Ace*, this is the one to avoid.



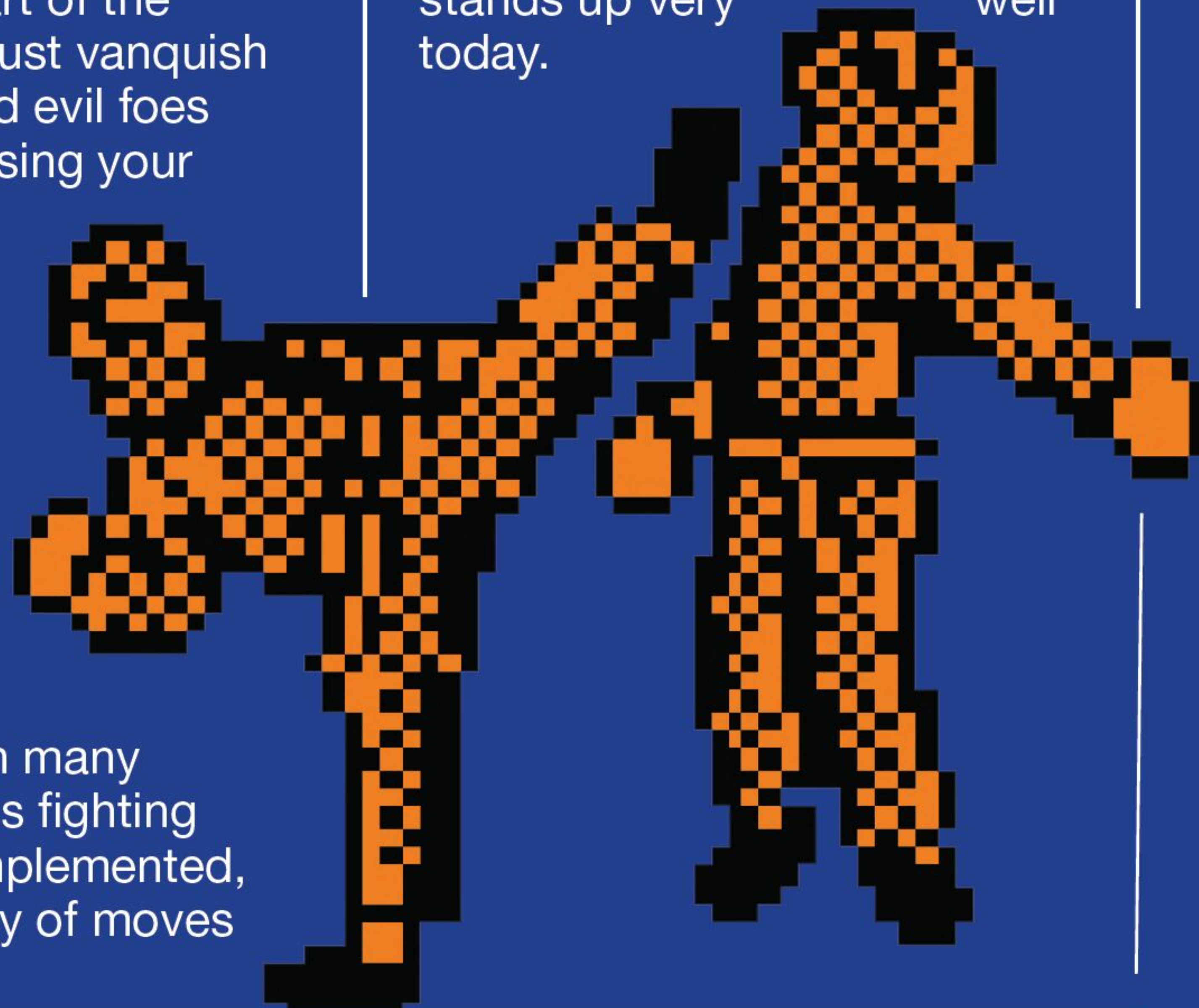
WAY OF THE TIGER



Based on a series of books, this side-scrolling fighter is rather unique but can be polarising to some. You play the part of the Avenger and must vanquish the demons and evil foes from the land using your fighting skills. Presented in great graphical detail using mode 1, with some rather stunning animation and parallax scrolling, it's a technical feat in many aspects. Various fighting methods are implemented, with a vast array of moves



to perform, which you can practice individually or play as part of the whole game. It's a great early example of a well-coded fighting game, and while some may think it's a bit slow-paced, it's a significant game on the CPC which stands up very well today.



CHEETAH MARKETING BANGING TO THE BEAT OF THE AMDRUM



Every decade has its own defining sound, and during the 1980s, that was very much electronic synth. This was in part thanks to the creation of electronic drum kits; little boxes with fancy circuitry and twisty little knobs and buttons that could replicate a drum kit with their digitally recorded drum sounds. These boxes cost hundreds of pounds, but in 1986, Cheetah Marketing released the Amdrum for the CPC at a fraction of the price. But was it any good? Colin Bell fires up his own Amdrum from his collection and finds out.

With a little help from my micro

Amdrum is a smart little drum synthesiser that connects easily to the expansion port on the back of your CPC. There is also a

lead that must then be connected to the LINE or AUX Input connectors on a hi-fi amplifier, which, fortunately, I have to hand. All connected and ready to rock, it's time to load up the drum software

which comes on cassette, although there are instructions on how to transfer this to a disk. The software doesn't take long to load, and as it does, we're treated to a lovely



Above: The Amdrum's rather nice loading screen.

loading screen featuring a drum, CPC6128, and the Cheetah Marketing logo. With drum software now loaded, we're still not quite ready as we now have to load in the 'Kit' or demo tracks. Loading the 'Kit' is once again a straightforward process, provided you have a copy of the manual to tell you the commands, and it's



not long before we have nine demonstration tracks to play around with. The demo tracks are named



Above: Demo tracks all loaded it's time to make some noise!

and include demo, claps, punky, dance, reggae, rock, march, and silly.

Sampled Sound

Listening to the demo tracks, I can't help but be initially impressed at the quality of the sampled

a real drum machine which costs hundreds of pounds. But what is the difference? Well, a drum machine essentially works by taking a sound and turning it into an electrical signal. The signal size is then measured and assigned a digital value. The value can then be stored in the drum machine's memory where it can be recalled as required as an electrical signal, which in turn plays the sampled sound. This

is more commonly known as digitisation.

The better or more expensive the drum machine, the better the hardware, and the more accurately it can

measure the size of the sound signal and in turn produce a much more accurate sampled sound. What the Amdrum does, however, is make use



Above: The Am-Drum unit. Plugs neatly into the back of your CPC.

drum sounds. They're not perfect, but they are very close. We have to remember, of course, that this was a budget piece of CPC hardware, unlike

Try beating our AMDRUM!

Above: Fancy being a drumming god? Then you need the Amdrum! An advertisement for said hardware.

of the CPC's already present circuitry to take sounds stored as data on cassettes, instead of in memory, and turn that data back into an electrical signal, which is then amplified through your own home hi-fi amplifier.

Lets Rock!

The 'Kit' consists of eight different drum sounds: a bass drum, snare drum, mid & low tom-toms, open and closed hi-hats, claps, and a cowbell. The sounds themselves are excellent and very faithful to those of an actual drum kit. There is a slight electronic overtone present, but that all adds to the effect and

mimics that cool 1980s drum machine sound. From here you can play around with the demo tracks, which show off some of the complex rhythms that the Amdrum is actually capable of, or you can, of course, create your own rhythm or 'Song' from scratch. Creating your 'Song' can be done either by entering numbers into a chart, where the numbers correspond to one of the eight sounds, or by drumming out the rhythm



Above: Line up your desired drum sounds to create your rhythm.

in real-time. All rhythms can be repeated or looped in any order or sequence you wish, and they can even be linked together. Once complete, you can save your masterpiece to either cassette or disk.

Pros & Cons

As with any peripheral such as this, there are pros and cons. Con-wise, you do need an amplifier and hi-fi, otherwise you won't be

able to hear any of the wonderful drum sound output. There's also no through connector at the back of the unit, so don't be expecting to add on any other additional peripheral devices. There's no MIDI port either which is a real shame, but I'd imagine that would have been too expensive to incorporate. In terms of the software it does take a bit to get to grips with, but after a couple of hours, it all makes sense.

When it comes to the pros, you certainly can't deny that the Am-Drum is an excellent little piece of hardware fully capable of delivering some very sophisticated electronic drum sounds and rhythms. Back in the day, of course I'd be praising the budget price, but nowadays this is more of a collector's piece, so expect to pay double to three times the price, especially if you can find one complete and in good condition.

So if you have a passion for 80s synth/rock music and fancy yourself as the next 808 State, Depeche Mode or New Order then the Cheetah Am-Drum is well worth dabbling in. Just remember, you'll need a vintage hi-fi or amplifier to connect it up to and a bunch of very understanding neighbours!

Retro Computer Festival 2023



Cambridge is the birthplace of the ZX Spectrum, Acorn Electron and, more recently, the Raspberry Pi. What better place for a museum dedicated to computing? Sean McManus visited the Centre for Computing History on a retro festival day.

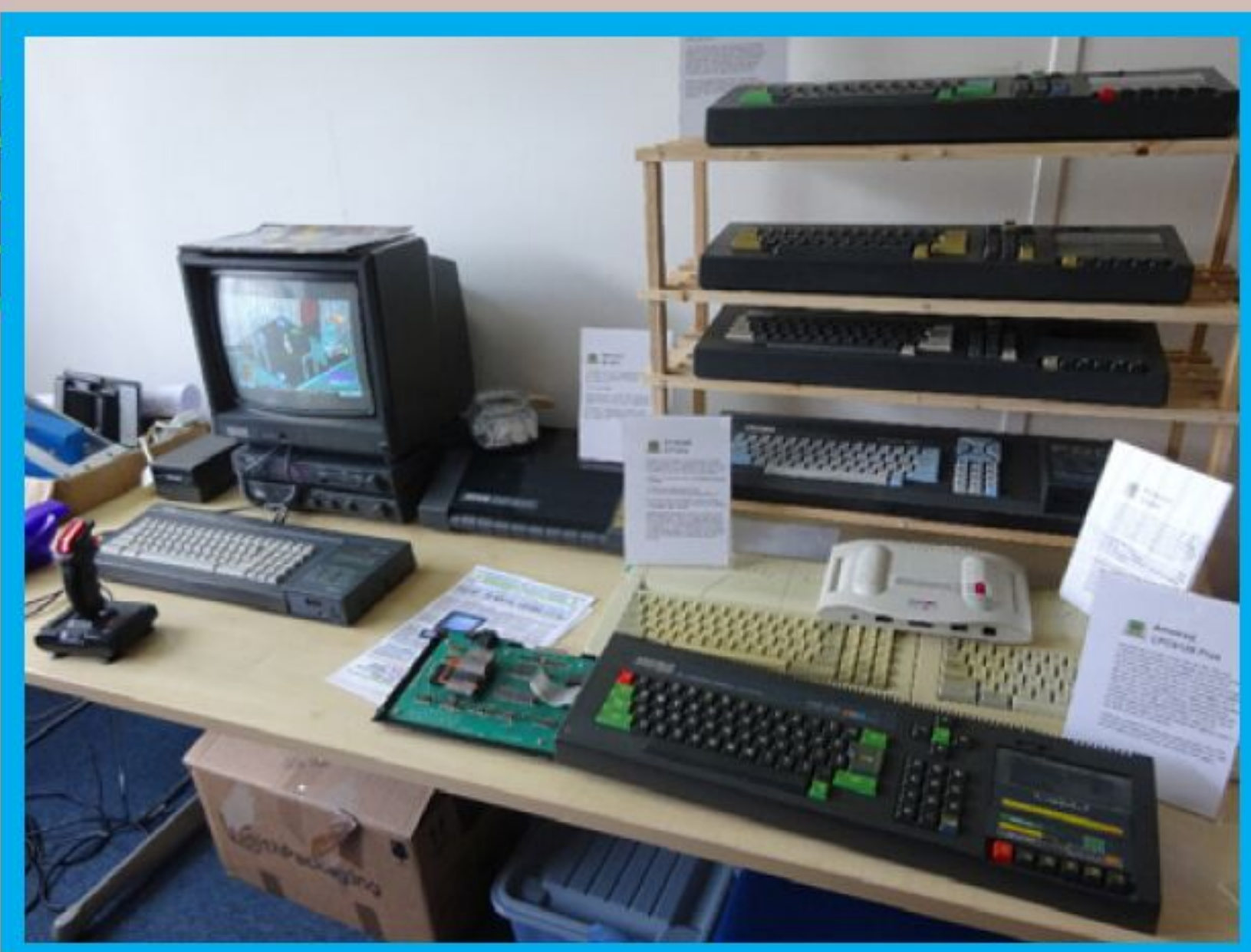
The Retro Computer Festival 2023 on the first weekend of November gave vintage gaming fans an opportunity to see a wide range of Amstrad machines, including a rare CPC 472.

The event took place at the Centre for Computing History, which is tucked away in the back of an industrial estate in Cambridge. This museum opened in 2013 and houses a wide range of computers and video game machines. There's an emphasis on British technology. Computers from Cambridge (including from Acorn and Sinclair) are proudly labelled.

For the Retro Computer Festival, about 30 collectors and hobbyists set up their own computers to complement the permanent displays. Pete Golding brought along a collection that included a Schneider 64K machine with brown



Above: Ich Bin Schneider!



Above: A lovely collection indeed.

keys where the green keys should be, a CPC 664 with its ridiculously chunky cursor keys, and the CPC 6128 Plus and GX4000. His CPC 6128 was running Get Dexter, one of the finest games for the Amstrad (see our Flash Back in issue 5).

The most intriguing machine in his collection was the CPC 472, which



Above: Rare - The CPC 472.

was sold exclusively in Spain. When the Spanish government imposed an import tax on computers with 64K or less in 1985, Amstrad simply added another 8K of memory. The catch? It wasn't connected to anything. "We had basically stuck two fingers in the air to the Spanish government," Alan Sugar wrote in his autobiography. "As a result of this exercise, we managed to sell at least another 50,000 units in the Spanish market in the Christmas season," he added.

The CPC 472 at the museum was displayed with

the case open, so you could see the extra board that was created with the redundant RAM chip. This one had a BASIC 1.1 (CPC 664) ROM chip on it, so it was one of the earlier CPC 472s. Later machines reverted to BASIC 1.0 for greater compatibility.

For Amstrad fans, there are several other exhibits of interest in the permanent collection. A CPC 6128 was equipped with a Dandanator providing instant access to some of the best games, including Arkanoid and (isometric) Batman. The PCW 8256 word processor was powered up, as was the PC 1512, both of which made serious computing much more accessible to homes and businesses. Also on were the portable but clunky PPC 512 and the



Above: Portability! - The PPC 512

E-mailer phone, as seen on The Apprentice and almost nowhere else. I got to play a GX4000 for the first time, but the NC100 notepad wasn't powered up.

There's a wide range of other unique and production machines, aside from Amstrad relics. A prototype ZX Spectrum, a BBC Micro signed by members of the

development team, and one of Douglas Adams' old computers are on show. The machine that used to run London Underground's Bakerloo line is about the size of three large fridges. There's a row of home computers with games running for you to try. I loved playing Centipede and Space Invaders on original arcade cabinets, too.

You'll probably find they have machines from your past. I enjoyed seeing the 380Z and Nimbus by Research Machines, similar to the computers I first used in school. We had an ICL One Per Desk on loan at home for a bit when I was a kid, so it was nice to meet that again here.

The museum is well worth a visit, and if you can tie it in with a retro weekend like this, all the better. It was a friendly event, and the festival gave me a chance to see machines such as the Sharp MZ-80K (where you had to use the character set for all graphics), the Aquarius II (believed to be the only working one in the world), and a recreated Bywood Scrumpi, a single board kit computer from 1976. This was shown by Tim Gilberts (also known for his work at Gilsoft, which sold The Quill adventure writing system).

Thanks to everyone who shared their collections and expertise at the festival and to the team at the museum for making it a fun and memorable day.

AMTIX! Back

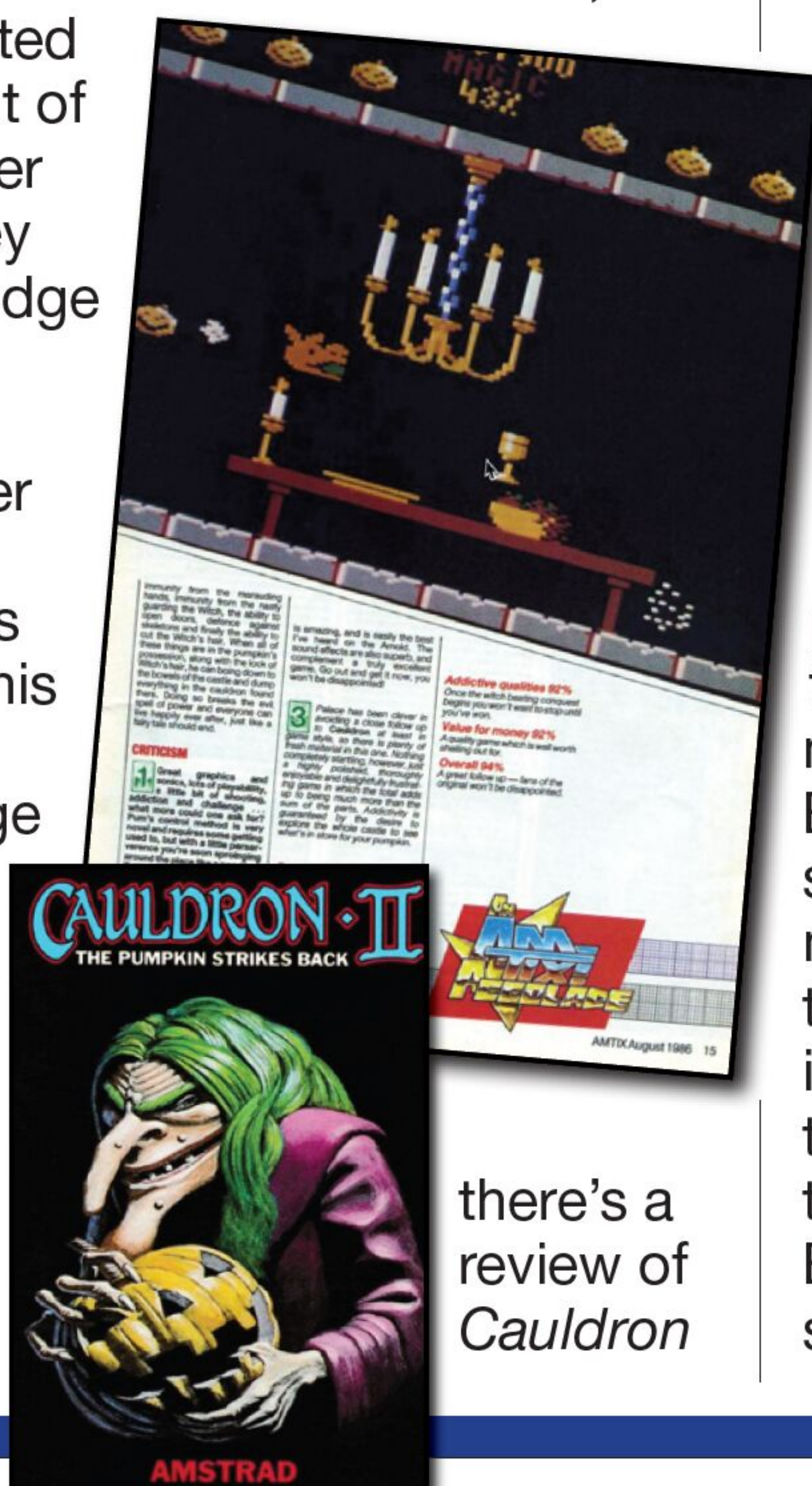
CPC

Our resident CPC historian Paul Davies looks back at the original August 86 Issue #10 of AMTIX magazine.



them? How many times did we spend the best part of £10 on a game that didn't live up to expectations? Quite why Amtix! decided to use a severed hand to illustrate this, I'm not sure, but also, why not? Elsewhere,

If someone wanted you to move out of the way in a rather rude manner, they may well say 'Budge it!'. Another term that sounds the same but is rather more polite is 'budget', and this is the theme of this month's issue of Amtix! with a large selection of games reviewed for those who didn't want to spend more than £1.99 on a game. Who can blame



there's a review of *Cauldron*

AMTIX Issue #10

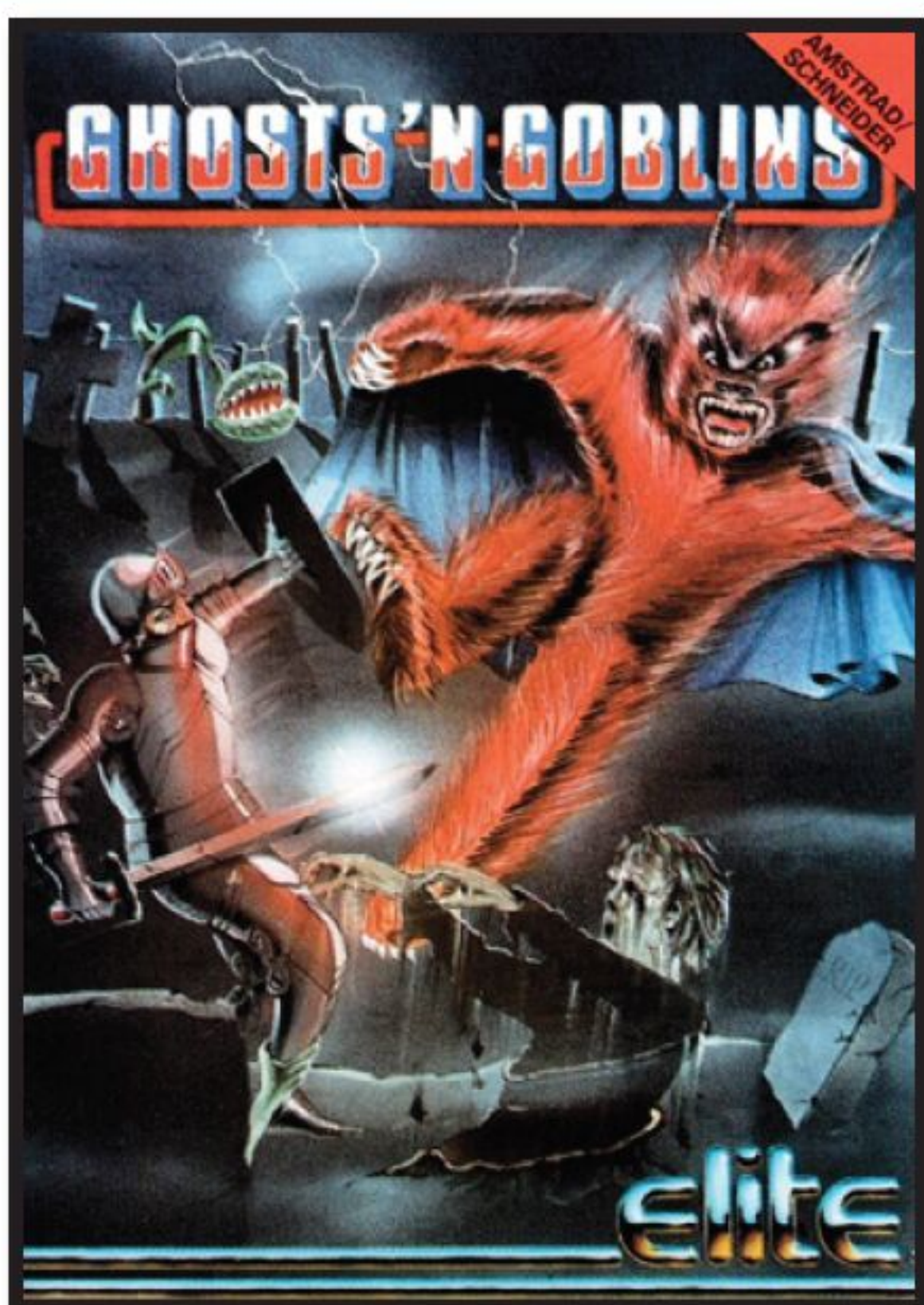
II, a map of *Heavy on the Magick*, and competitions! Very nice. Let's dig in.

This month's editorial brings big news regarding the staff of Amtix! as there are new members of the team to welcome. First up is Lee Paddon, who made his way over from that other magazine, *Your Computer*, to take on the role of software editor and who, when asked to describe himself, stated, 'I have a wife and Siamese cat to support, as well as a drink habit.' I guess he'll fit right in. Anthony Clarke was already a member of the Amtix! team who was usually found in the Am-tech pages of the mag, though made the move to Technical Editor, which seemed like a logical move given his technical knowledge in all things... well, technical. Finally, there's Richard Eddy, a very young spring chicken at the



age of 18 who joined the reviewing team, though in doing so was replacing a legend in reviewing circles - Gary Liddon, who had recently moved to software house Thalamus. Big shoes to fill (size 13, I hear) indeed, so he had quite the job on his hands. How would he get on? I guess we'd find out how his career would begin in this issue.

Ghosts *N' Goblins* was, and still is, a very popular game, and the good news for Amstrad owners was that they could now get their hands on it, albeit after the Speccy and Commodore owners had already had



their fun with it. Sometimes things are worth waiting for, so maybe this conversion would be just the thing for Amstrad fans to get excited about and feel the wait was justified. Ghosts N' Goblins was always one of those games where I'd lose my rag due to the level of difficulty, though I also appreciate a challenge, so it was hard to pick a side when it came to where I sat with it. High difficulty was a negative, but on the positive side of things, it was good when you got hit as

it was fun seeing your little man running about in his pants. The conflict is real! Although Elite had done a decent job of this one, there was one thing that would have lost me. The main draw to the game had not made it to the Amstrad incarnation - you don't lose your clothes! What? No music - I can live with that. Omitting some bosses - no complaints from me. No man running around in his undies? No deal. Overall, the Amtix! team is somewhat impressed though there are mixed thoughts about this one, leaving an overall score of 80%. I bet most of the points deduction is from a lack of Y-front action, though.

Harvey Headbanger sounds like a good album title for an

eighties metal band but is also a highly-rated game this month. You control Harvey, who's been out on the sauce all night and is now nursing the mother of all migraines. No Harvey, it's not a migraine: that, sir, would be a hangover. The best way to cure a hangover? Well, it's to take on your arch-drinking rival Hamish Highball, of course. Both suffering from the same 'illness' *ahem* they decide to challenge each other to a game, the game here being to see who can cover the highest number of squares on the game screen. Making contact with each other will lead to a bonus headache for each character, with them spinning across the

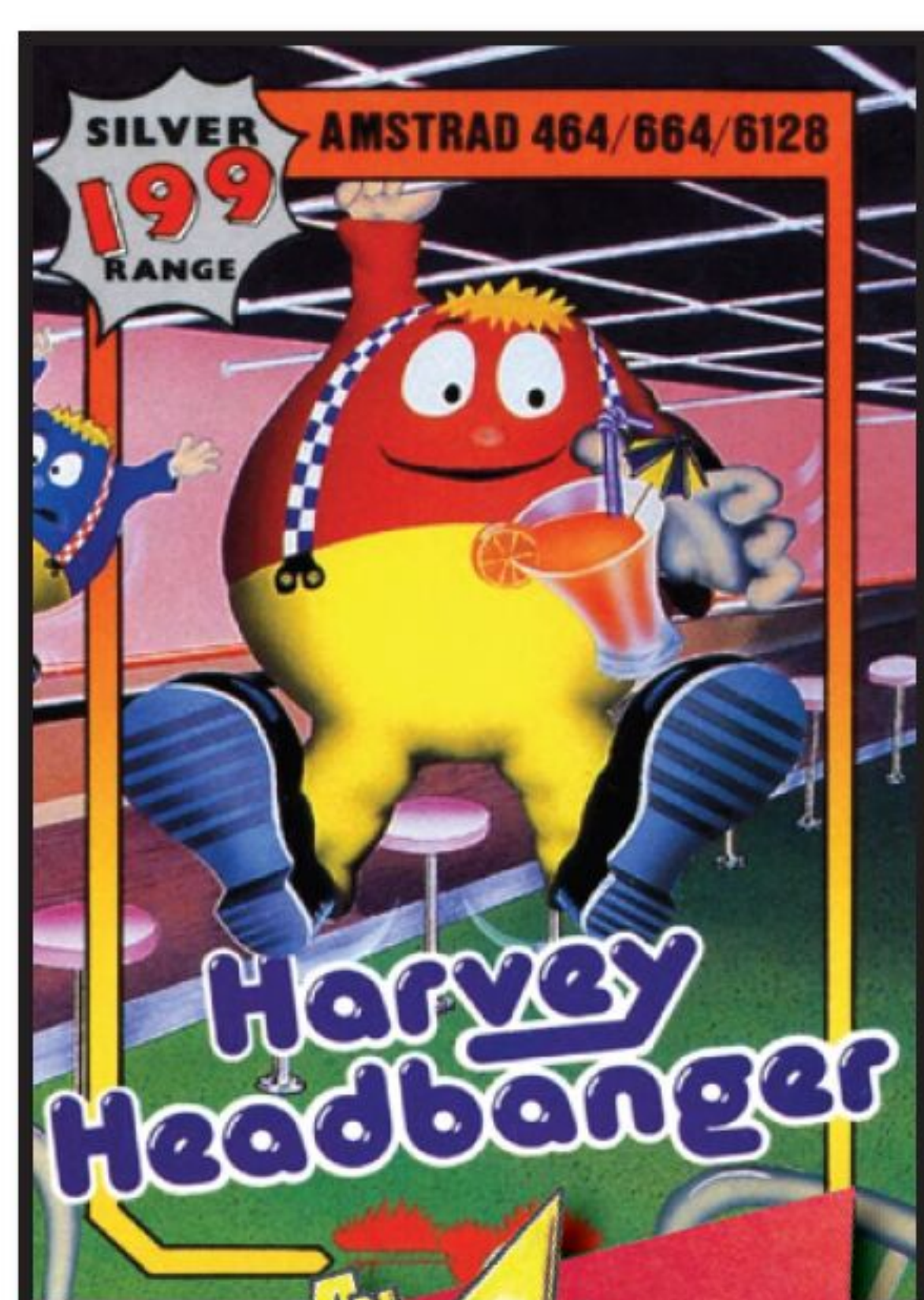
screen as they battle to keep balance. To help with this,

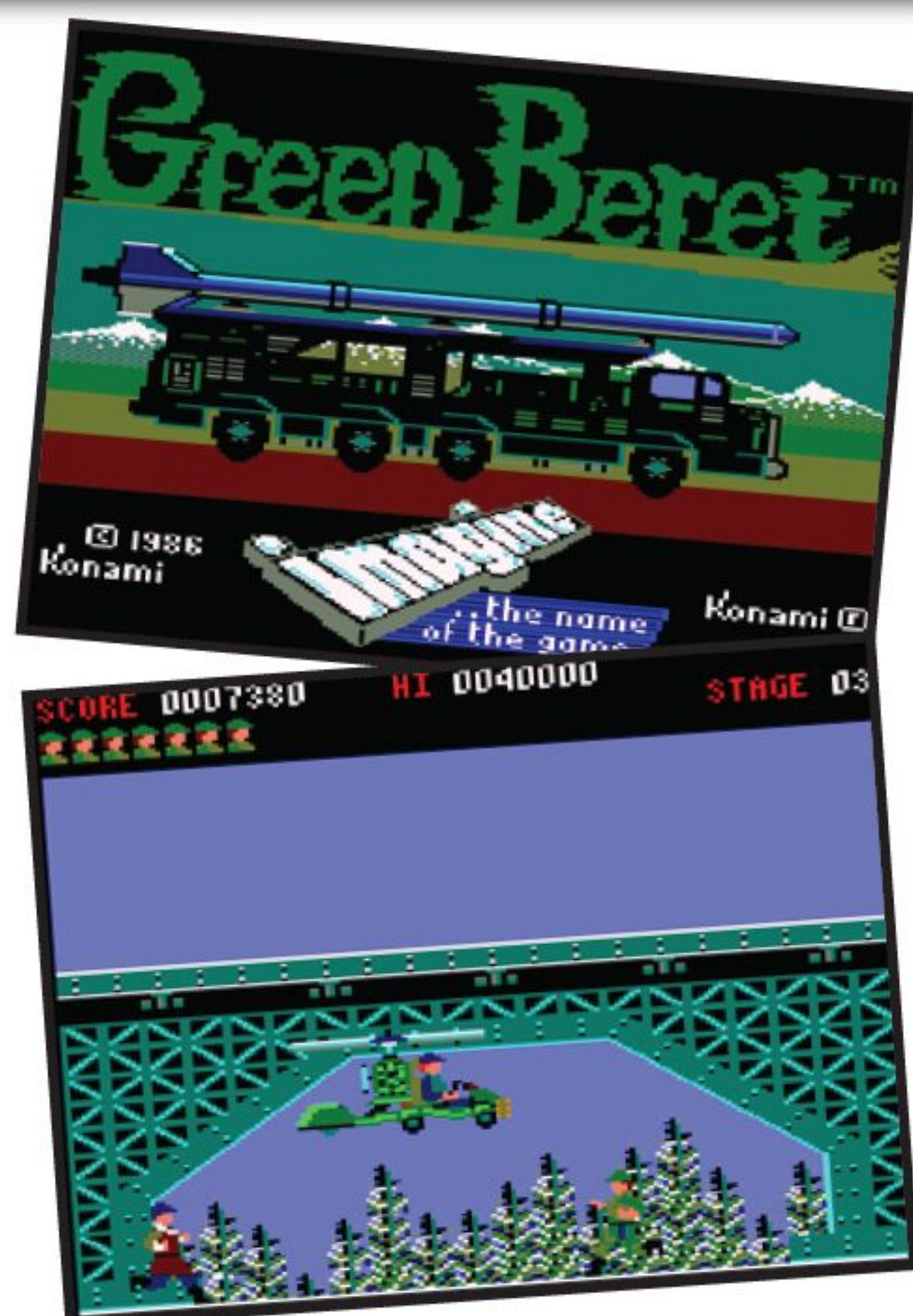


though, are several drinks, with the drinking of these helping

to reduce the impact of such occurrences. It seems this is the simplest of simple games, but there is an element of charm about this one which has got the Amtix! guys very happy indeed. Maybe they had a few jars before reviewing it? That would certainly help, though if that was the case, then I'm sure we'd have got a lot more high-scoring games this month than there are *hic*. 93% is a whopping score for a budget title at £1.99, definitely what you would class as a bargain, though this one has not found its way into the special 'budget' feature this month - will there be any as highly rated as Harvey in there? We'll find out in a bit.

Stab! Run! Stab! Run! Run! Stab! Stab! Get shot. Fall to the floor. Get up. Stab! Stab! Stab! In case you're not sure what game





I'm referring to, or indeed if you think I've gone completely insane, let me alleviate your concerns by informing you that I am referring to *Green Beret*, the ultimate arcade stabber, which now graces the humble Amstrad. Yes, the ultimate run 'n' gu... erm, stab was here, and it was here for you to release your frustrations as you took on a ridiculous

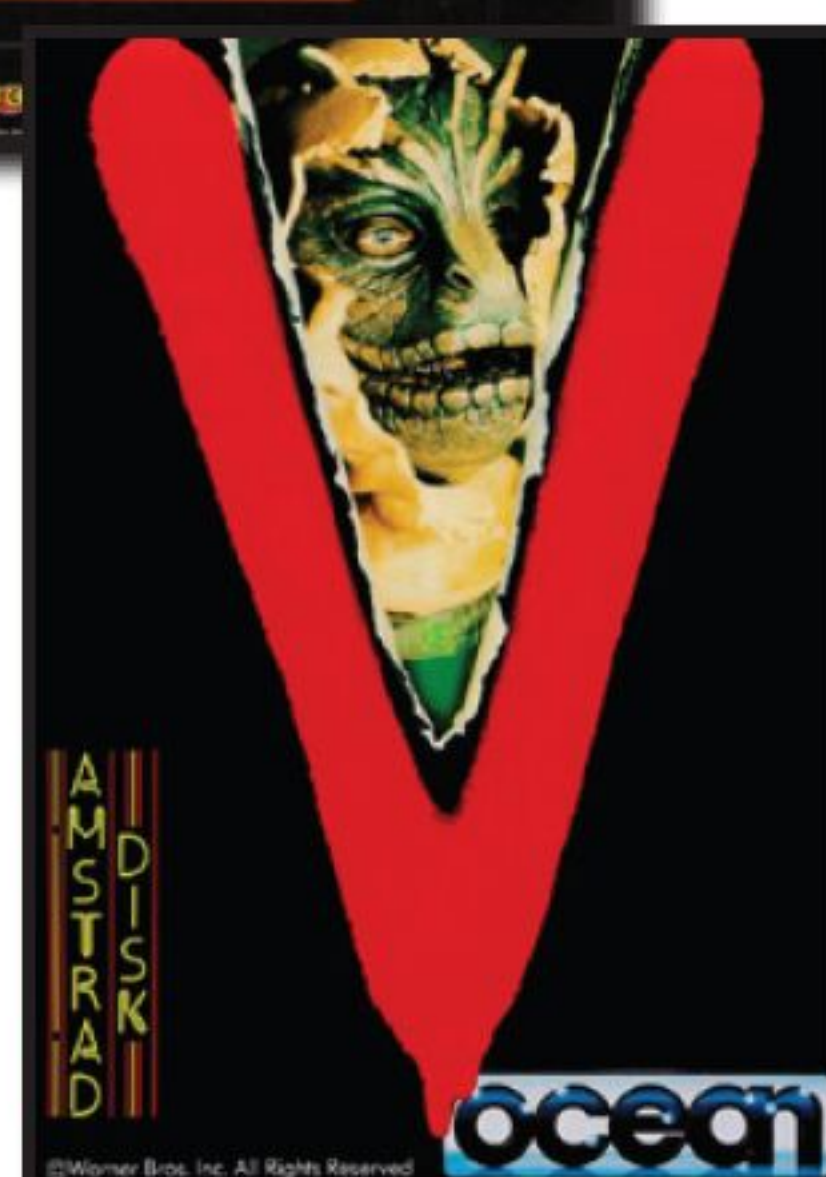
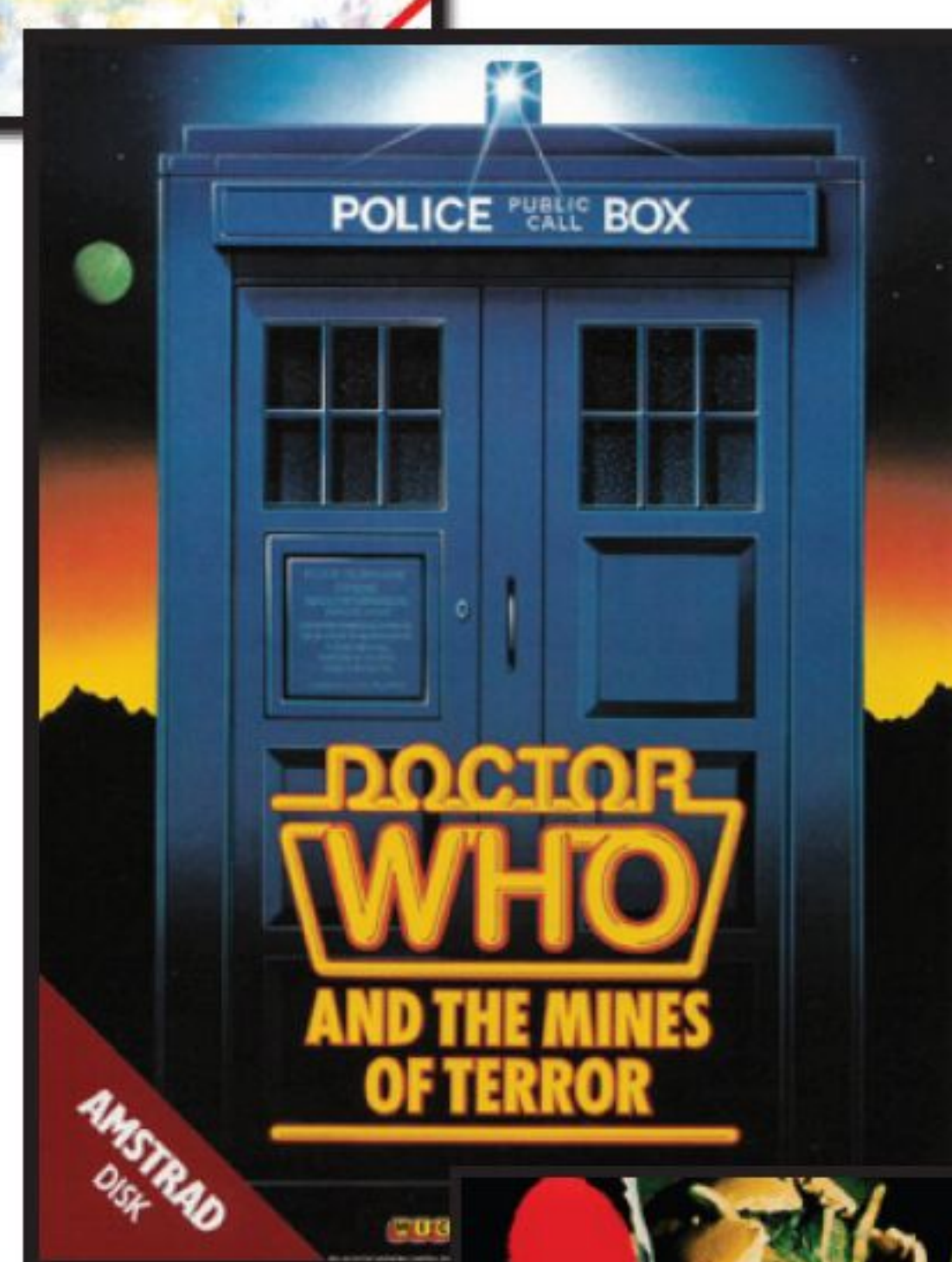
number of soldiers, in order to complete your mission to... well take on lots of soldiers with a knife until they all went away. Like every other incarnation of *Green Beret*, this version was also rock solid. I mean, why does the game choose to give you a knife to go on a military rampage with as opposed to a nice gun so that you can keep a safe distance as you create total carnage? Who knows. It's a little different, I suppose, and on top of that, it keeps all those challenge-seeking gamers happy, and with *Green Beret*, that's exactly what you'll get. This version appears to be a good one, albeit with a little issue that sometimes your stabs are not recorded correctly, leading to you losing a life or two. That could be a problem I suppose, though you could just look at it as adding to the challenge? There's always a positive!

A few disappointing games appear this month, which all have a similar theme - they're either film or TV tie-ins. *Biggles*, *Dr Who and The Mines*

of Terror, and *V* are all games to be missed, with scores



of 54%, 48%, and 22%



Disappointing big budget and television tie-ins - *Biggles* & *Dr. Who*

respectively, meaning that even the most ardent fan of these would be pushed to find any pleasure out of the playing these, despite any allegiance one may have to these cult classics. Well, maybe referring to *Biggles* as a 'cult classic' is pushing it a bit, but you know what I mean.

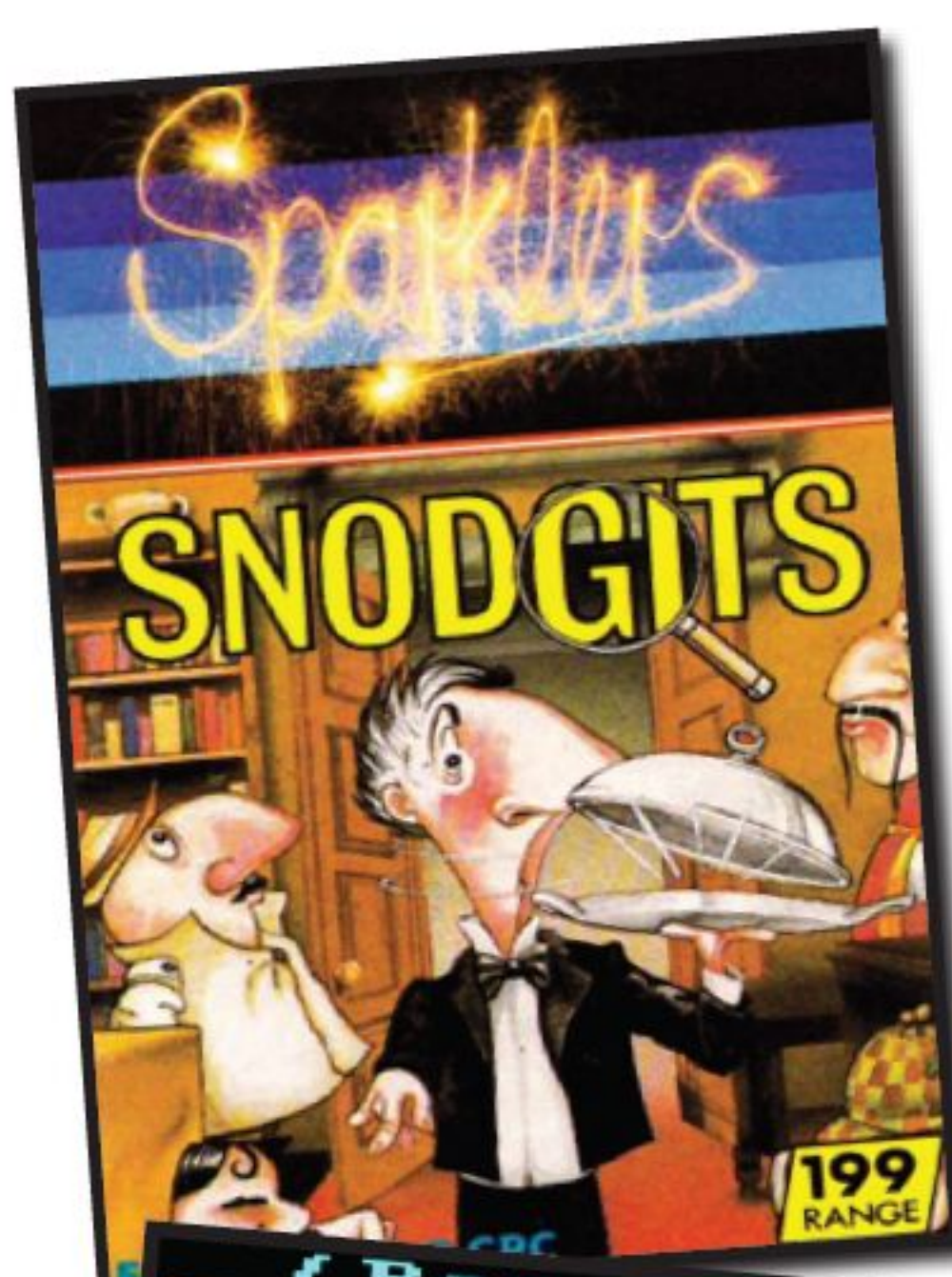
Okay. Here we go - it's budget game time! Does a lower price mean

lower quality? The first page of reviews here would suggest so. Eek. *Snodgits* and *The Wild Bunch* were perhaps not the games to lead with for this particular feature,

with the former racking up a total of 60% and the latter only managing slightly better with 65%.

You'd think that things will only get better, or would we be d-reaming? It seems they would get better with the masters of budget, Mastertronic, getting their

first entry with *Kane*, the Wild West gun-



toting escapade which was warmly received on the other formats it could be

tried! Great playability, great sound, and an overall score of 85%. Though it comes at a price slightly higher than Mastertronic was offering, even at £2.99, you would get your money's worth..

From one end of the spectrum to the other. Whilst Mastertronic and Bubble Bus can sit comfortably, software house Antarctic had better not sit down at all. *Voodoo Rage* is a game that is best forgotten (not that I'd ever heard of it),

referenced as a very poor *Manic Miner* clone which involves avoiding the usual nasties, but also whacking your mate over the head with a rolling pin at the

right time? Is there a right time to do this? I guess that's academic, as after reading some of the comments in the review, I doubt you'd play this for more than 15 seconds. The quote on the Graphics heading reads 'colourful, but so is a road accident'. Oof. For Addictive Qualities, 'Load it once and scrub the cassette'. This is getting



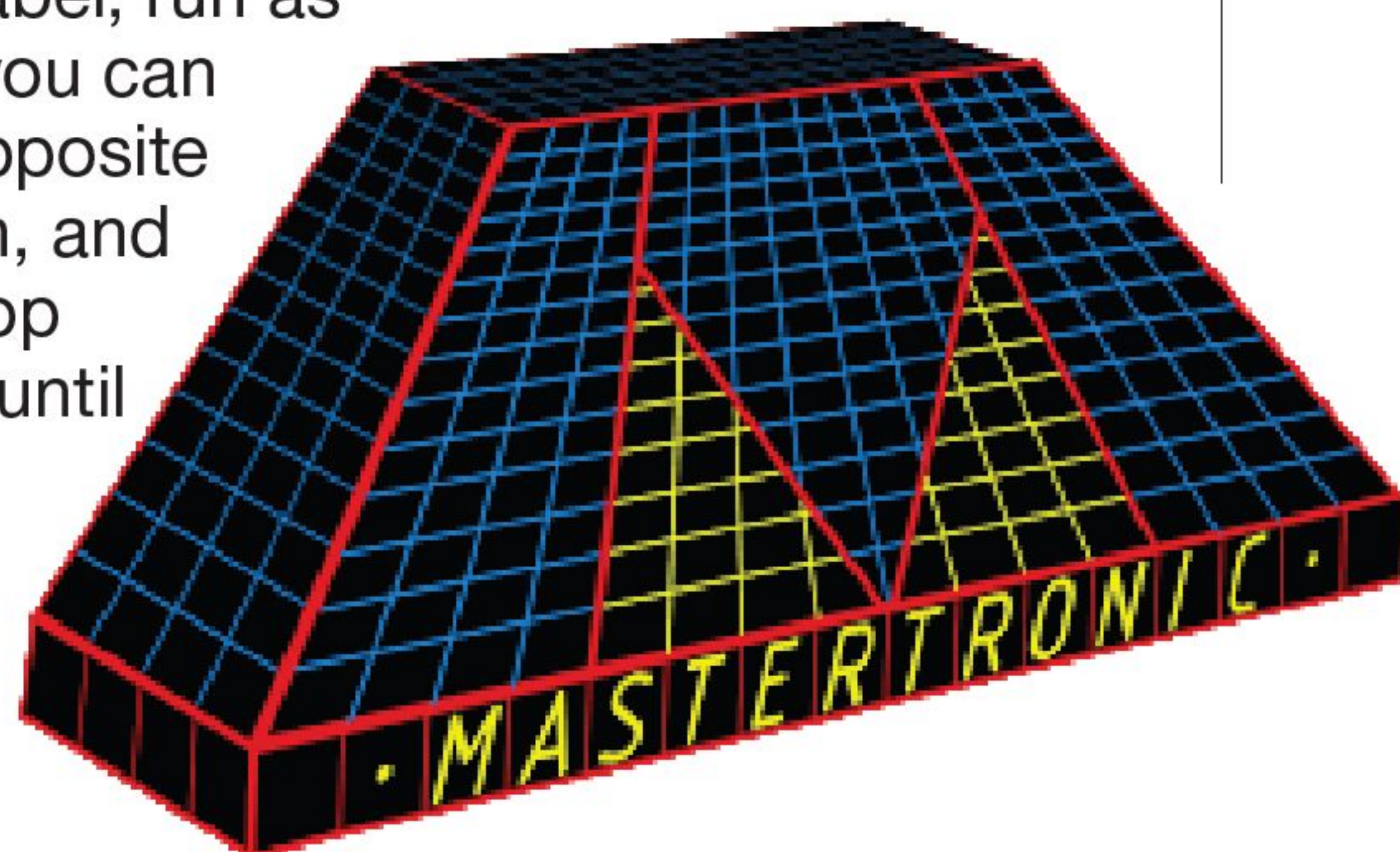
and when you catch your breath again, run some more.

There you have it, folks. Amtix! 10, done. It had its ups and downs in terms of software, but ultimately, another great read. Join me next time for Issue number 11, and we'll

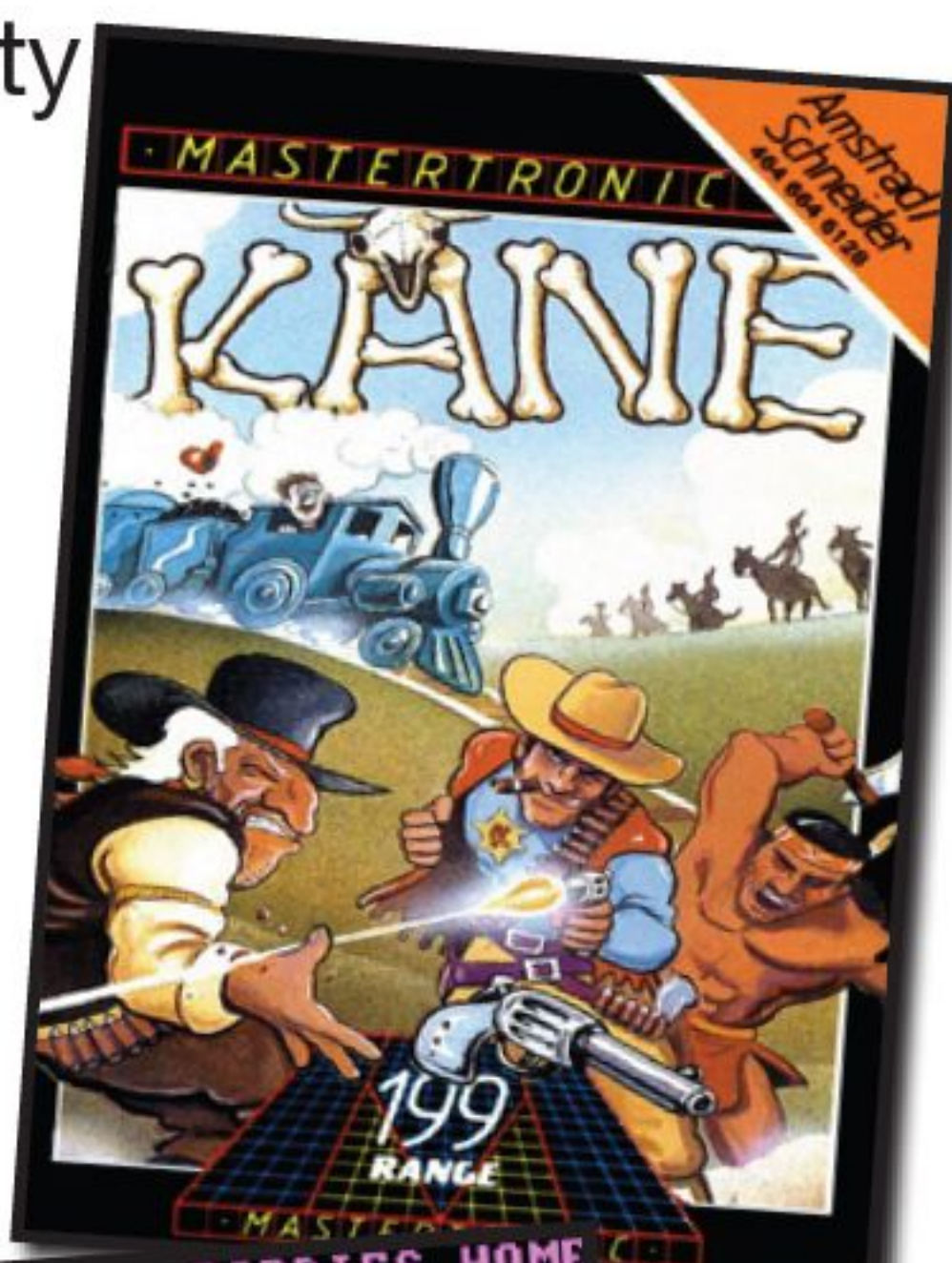
uncomfortable. The Overall heading says it's 'An expensive way to tell people not to buy your next game'. And to top it off, it gains a score of 10%. Amtix - stop! It's already dead!

After that feature, the overall message we get is if you want a good budget game, you won't go far wrong with a Mastertronic title. By all means, take a chance on another software house, but if it has Antarctic anywhere on the label, run as fast as you can in the opposite direction, and don't stop running until you're out of breath,

see if we can find a game worse than *Voodoo Rage*. The chances are very slim, but hey, just like fans of *Green Beret*, I do like a good challenge.



found on. As it's a Mastertronic release, it naturally came with quite a nifty price tag of £1.99, which for an 80% rated game, was quite the steal. Similarly,



Bubble Bus did pretty well with their take on the arcade classic *Space Invaders* with the originally titled *Classic Invaders*. So... couldn't think of a more imaginative title, eh Bubble Bus? You could have at least

PREVIEWS

Booty The Remake - Classic Firebird title gets a makeover for the CPC!

Previews by Colin Bell



Booty hit our shelves way back in 1984 as one of Firebird Software's initial launch releases. In the game, you take on the role of a young cabin boy who decides he's had enough of his pirate superiors and thinks it a good idea to steal all their treasure. As well as the pirates themselves you have to avoid parrots and booby-trapped treasure

chests. Once you collect all the treasure you have only forty-five seconds to locate the final key to open the last chest.

Fast forward almost forty years - yikes! - and PlayOnRetro have announced a remake of this classic title. Not much is known about the remake at the time of writing but they have teased a gorgeous

new loading screen and a couple of screenshots showing some of the in-game play.

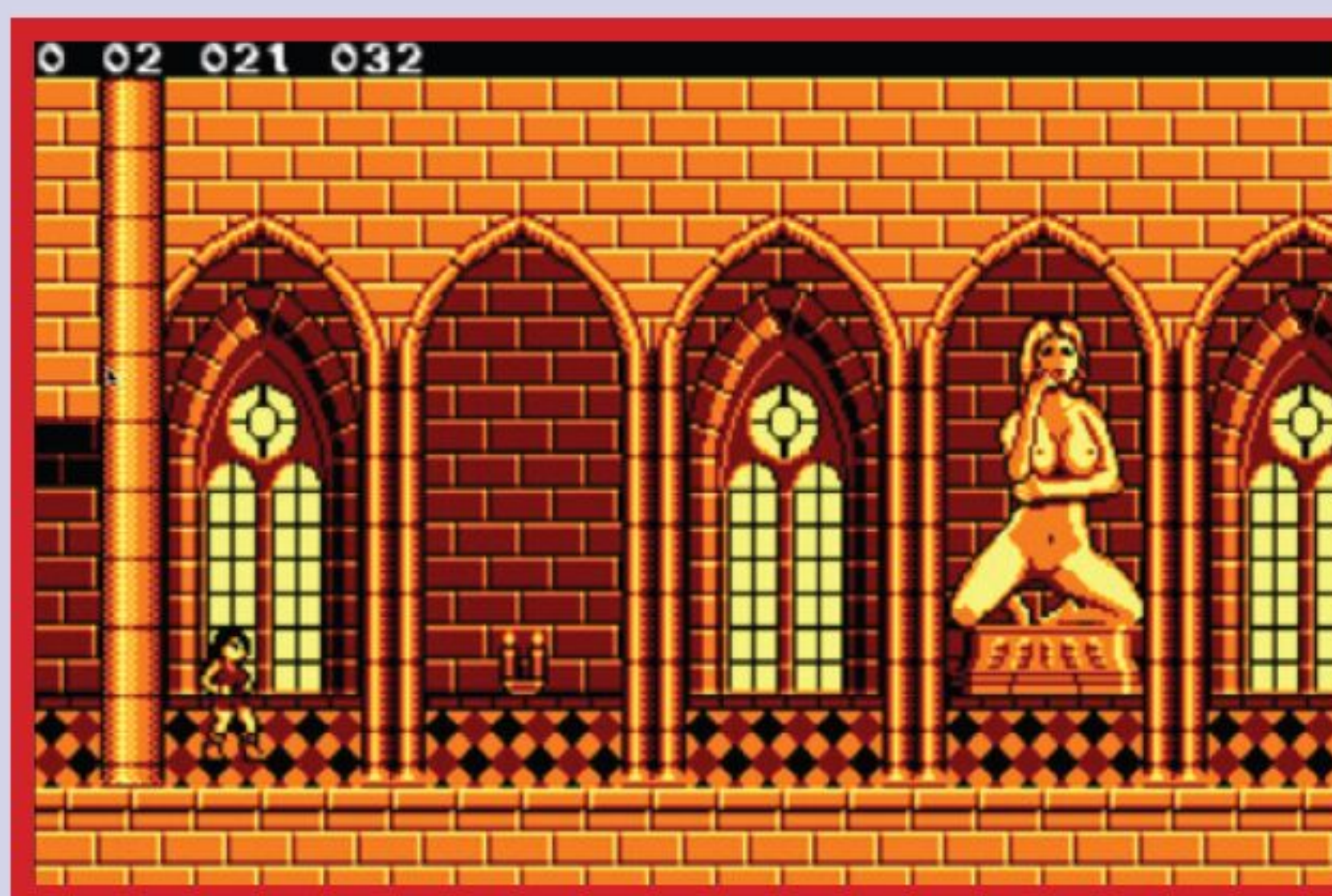
Comparing these to the original there is a massive difference, and so far, things are looking very promising.

Hopefully we'll get the chance to bring you a full review once the game is released.

Mighty Castle Adventure finally gets an update!

Mighty Castle Adventure is a Castlevania-style adventure that has been on our radar for a while now. Demo footage of the game first appeared almost a year ago on the Amstradians Facebook page, and once again via that source we have been given an update by the game's developer Yogtze.

If you look at the two screenshots, the one on the left shows



how the game originally looked while the one on the right shows the updated graphics; a big improvement, I'm sure you'll agree. Yogtze has teased more game footage



and screens soon, as well as an update on the game's map size. Currently, it's for 128K machines only. More on this interesting title as we get it.

Frogger Junior - Adaptation of Konami's arcade classic coming to the CPC



Everyone knows *Frogger*. If not, just for you, it was an arcade game originally released way back in 1981 by Konami. The object of the game, as with most early titles, was rather simple. Guide your little frog across the busy road full of cars, trucks, and bulldozers and then across the river via wooden logs and turtles in order to make it safely back

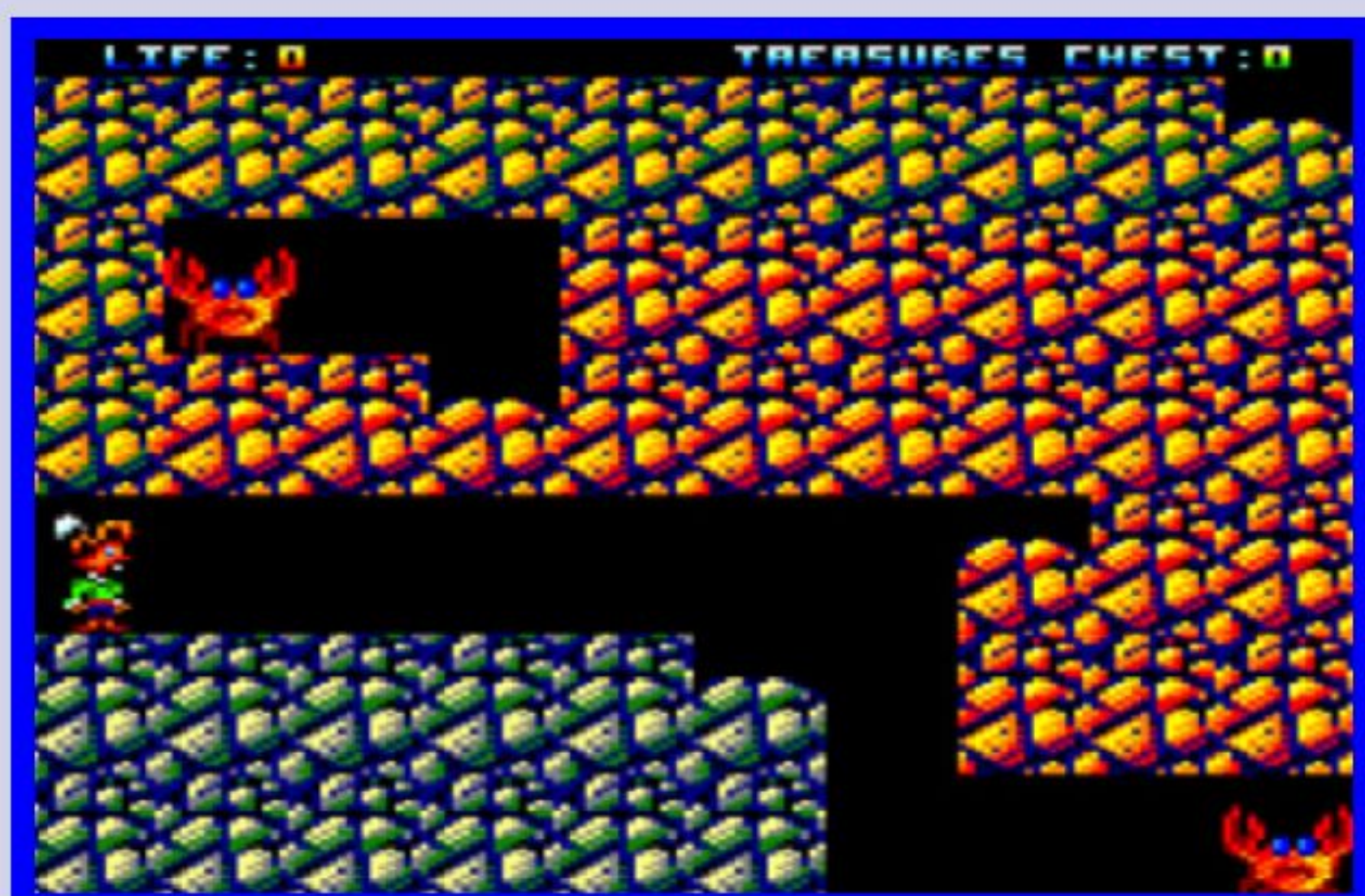
home. Do this five times, and you progress to the next level. A CPC version of this arcade classic was released back in 2007 and it wasn't half bad, but it was purely a port of the original.

Now, however, comes word from Eric Cubizolle aka TITAN that he's looking for programmers to help him work on an updated version, based on the

arcade original, called *Frogger Junior*. The gameplay is essentially the same, but it now looks like we're going to get some gorgeous updated graphics and cutscene artwork from Eric himself, who has produced some outstanding CPC graphics over the last few years.

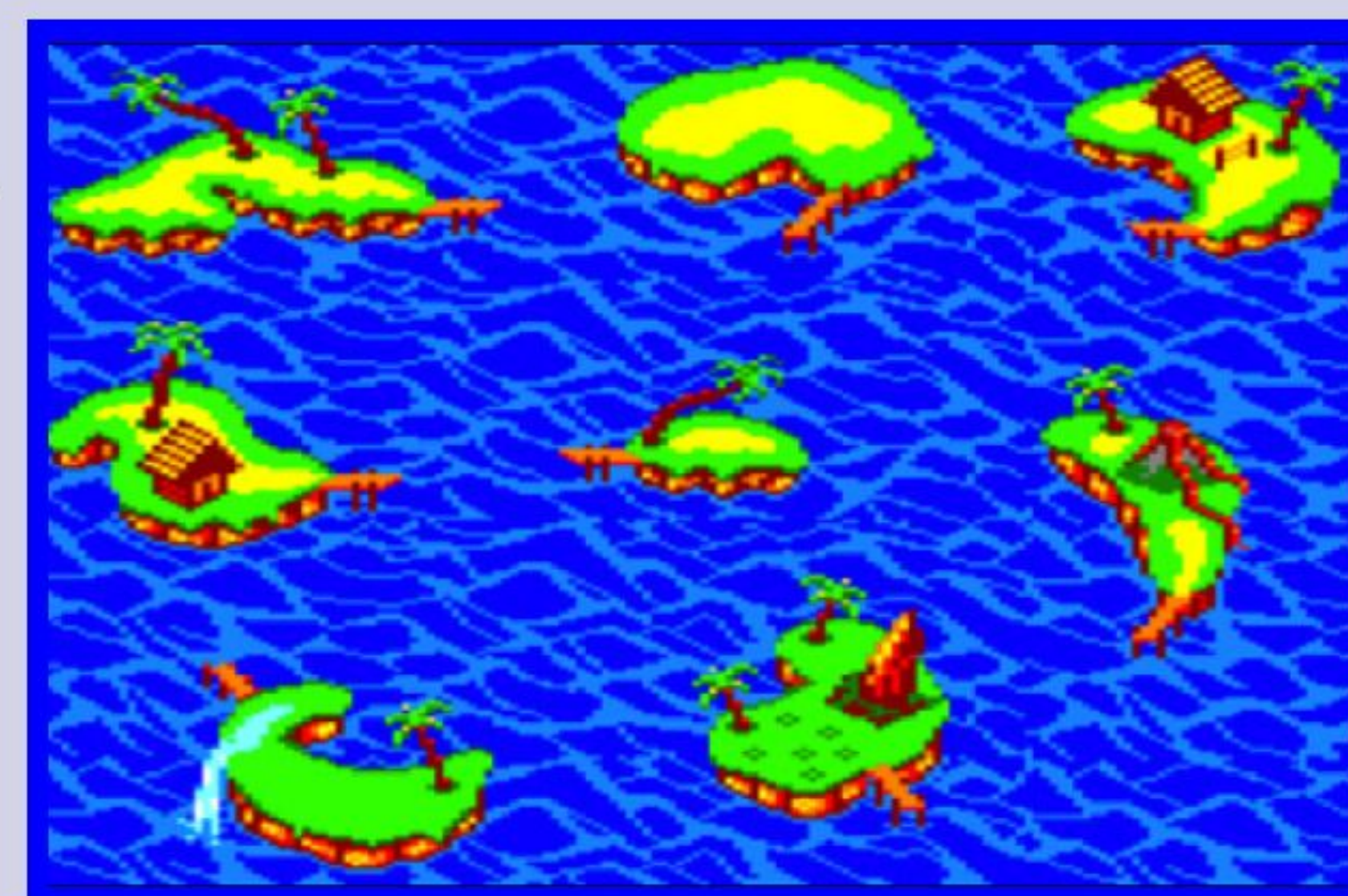
Ahoy there, shipmate! Roland set to return in Swashbuckling sequel!

Man of many talents and official CPC mascot Roland looks set to return in *Roland Ahoy II*. A direct sequel to Amsoft's *Roland Ahoy*, the aim of the game



is to sail the seven seas once more and locate eight lost treasure chests spread across eight different islands. The chests are all well buried, however, and Roland will have to dig deeper than he's ever dug before if he's going to succeed. He'll also have to watch out for some underground nasties along the way.

Roland Ahoy II is yet another game that has



had graphics teased by Eric Cubizolle, and with him on hand, you know this is going to be a visually stunning-looking sequel. Let's hope the gameplay is just as swashbucklingly good!

AMTIX! CPC

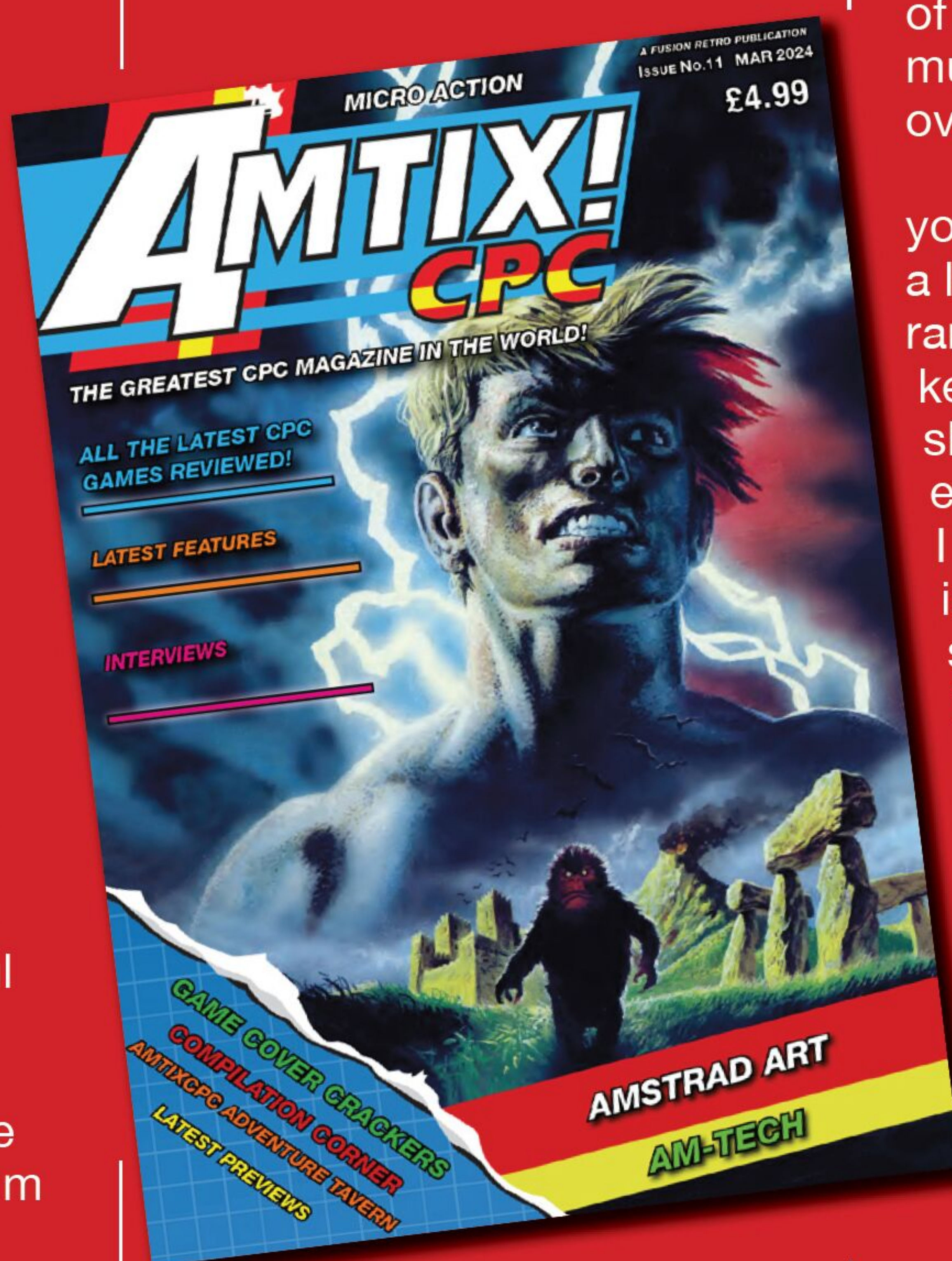
Sign Off



Wow, what another jam-packed fantastic issue and a fine way to celebrate us reaching double figures. It's a proud moment for me as editor and a proud moment for the rest of the hard-working team who reside here over at AMTIX-CPC Towers.

As well as celebrating our double-figure goal, we must also acknowledge what has been yet another outstanding and successful #CPC RetroDev contest. It never fails to amaze me the number of titles that are submitted each year, and I'm in awe of the sheer quality

of some of this year's entries, BLAH BLAH in particular, which I would say is my personal



favourite of the competition so far. I say so far, as I've yet to get the chance to play many of the entries, which I'm very much looking forward to doing over the coming weeks.

Last issue, I did promise you all that I'd be bringing you a look at Cred Breaks Out, the rare CPC title I found in a basket of cassettes in an antiques shop. Sadly, there just wasn't enough space this issue, but I will get around to it for next issue, along with a look at some other rare titles I have in my collection.

Until then, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas for when it comes and a Happy New Year! Speaking of which, why not get Santa to bring you a lovely new binder to put all your precious issues of AMTIXCPC into? Shameless plug there - Anyway! We'll see you all in 2024 and Issue #11!



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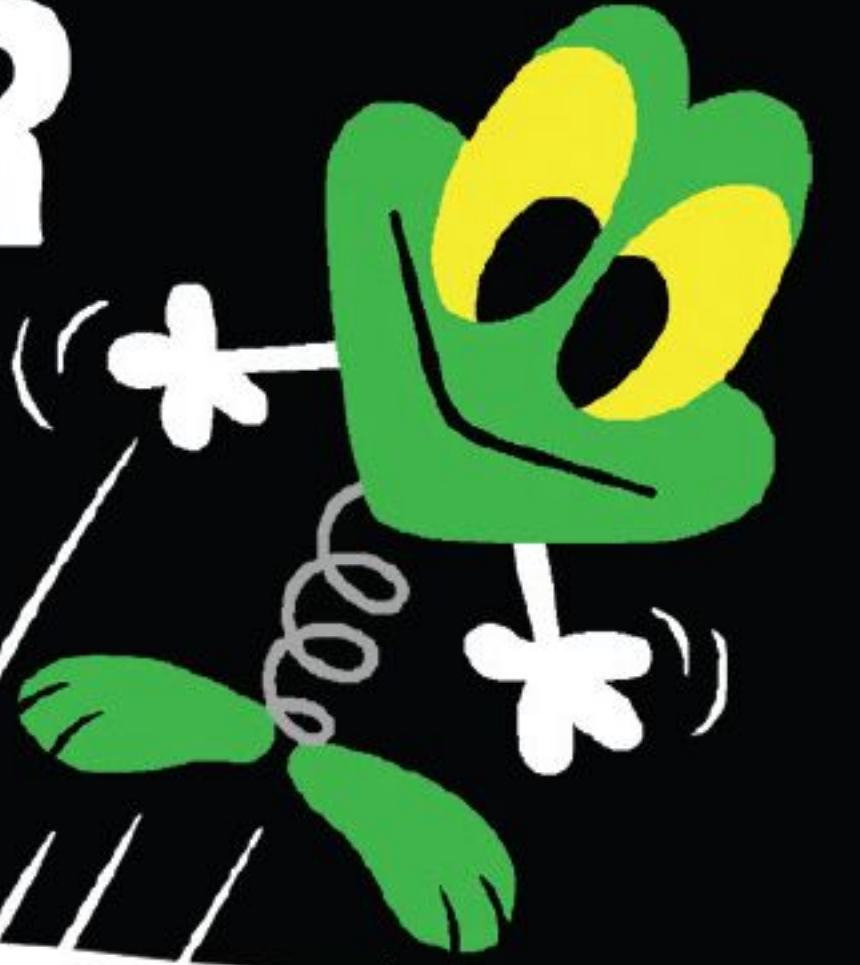
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